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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Introduction and Notes by

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INTRODUCTION

I. Life of William Shakespeare

It has been frequently stated, as a cause for regret, that we really know very little about the facts of Shakespeare's life. So far as details are concerned, this is true. But there is not as much cause for regret as has been sometimes imagined. If we look into the lives of other dramatic writers of Queen Elizabeth's day, we find that we do not know a great deal more, if as much, about them as we do about Shakespeare himself. In the absence of as much biographical fullness as we might like, we may congratulate ourselves that, after all, we have something far more valuable—his tragedies, his comedies, his histories, and his poems.

William Shakespeare, the greatest playwright of his time, and, perhaps, the greatest that the world has ever seen, was born in Warwickshire, in the small town of Stratford-on-Avon, in April, 1564. Three months later, the Plague, that terrible, but, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, very frequent destroyer of life, swept through the town; but fortunately for English drama and English literature, the infant was not one of its victims. The exact date of his birth is in dispute, but it is usually given as the twenty-third day of the month. Every year thousands of tourists from all parts of the globe examine the parish register which testifies that he was baptized on the twenty-

sixth. He was the third child and the first son of John and Mary (Arden) Shakespeare. The father was a prosperous merchant who dealt in skins and wool, and he must have been a man of more than ordinary ability as his neighbors elected him at different periods in his life, to the offices of Burgess, Constable, Chamberlain, Alderman, and High-Bailiff. Mary Shakespeare was the daughter of a successful farmer.

As a boy Shakespeare is supposed to have attended the Stratford Free Grammar School. The school still exists, and to this day interested visitors are shown the desk and chair that tradition assigns to the poet. The study of Latin formed the basis of the curriculum of such schools, and Horace, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, and Cicero were the authors commonly read. His friend and rival, Ben Jonson, has told us that he knew "small Latin and less Greek," which may be accounted for by the fact that Shakespeare's school life was rather short as a result of his father's later financial difficulties.

On November 28, 1582, when he was only eighteen, Shakespeare was married to Anne Hathaway, a woman seven years his senior, who lived at Shottery, a near-by village. Of this union there were born three children: Susanna, in 1583, and Hamnet and Judith, twins, in 1585. Susanna married John Hall, a prominent Stratford physician, in 1607; in February, 1616, Judith married Thomas Quiney, a Stratford wine-dealer; Hamnet died when he was eleven years old.

In 1585 (or 1586) Shakespeare left Stratford. According to the well-known story, which, like all others, may

be taken with a grain of salt, he was prosecuted by Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote for stealing deer from his park, and he thought it wise to leave for other parts. Regardless of the truth of the story Shakespeare took his revenge on strict Sir Thomas by composing an uncomplimentary ballad about him.

Arriving at London, he became connected with the theater, but the exact nature of his employment is not known. It has been stated—but no proof has been offered—that he secured his first knowledge of theatrical life by holding horses while their aristocratic masters were inside the playhouse. The years 1585-1592 are a blank in our record of Shakespeare's activities. How, or where, he spent his time, we do not know. In the latter year he must have been already well-known, as Robert Greene, a rival playwright felt called upon to attack him in an unpleasant pamphlet, *The Groat's Worth of Wit*.

Shakespeare began his career (1590-92) as a writer for the stage with *Henry VI*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and he closed it (1610-12) with *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*.

In 1597 he purchased New Place, one of the finest houses in Stratford, for the sum of £60 (\$300). In 1599 he purchased shares in The Globe, on the Bankside, a splendid theater which had been recently built by Richard Burbage and his brother, Cuthbert. In 1608—the year of John Milton's birth—he returned to Stratford. In March 1616 he made his will, in which he left the greater part of his property to his daughter, Susanna. He died on April 23,

1616—which is also the death date of Miguel De Cervantes, whose *Don Quixote* is one of the world's great books. The cause of his death is unknown. He was buried in the church in which he had been baptized. On his tombstone is cut the following effective, but unpoetical, inscription:

Good frend for Jesus sake forbear
To digg the dust enclosed heare;
Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones,
And curst be he yt moves my bones.

II. The Sources of the Merchant of Venice

The Merchant of Venice is composed of four separate plots or stories. They are (i) the Bond-story, centering around Shylock and Antonio, (ii) the Caskets-story, centering around Portia and Bassanio, (iii) the Lorenzo-Jessica story, and (iv) the Story, or episode, as it is usually called, of the Rings. Although these plots differ from one another widely, yet Shakespeare has succeeded so well in bringing all of them together in such a way that the result is a unified and evenly-constructed drama.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, as in his other plays, Shakespeare was not interested in inventing his story. The idea of creating a new plot never bothered him. His interest was always in the *manner* of treating the incident or event, not in the incident for its own sake, and in the portrayal of character under a certain set of circumstances. As he was concerned more with persons than with plots, it was his custom to take his material where he found it, and to do with it just as he pleased, or as he found necessary.

The materials (plays, books, poems, histories, tales) which he used for the facts of his plays are known as the sources, and critical students spend a great deal of time in tracing, or searching out, the sources employed by Shakespeare. However, as he was very free in using the work of other writers, and as he added to, and subtracted from, and altered and re-arranged the materials which came his way, there is always some danger of giving to a particular source more importance than it really deserves. Therefore it will be well for us to remember that when we describe certain works as the sources for *The Merchant of Venice*, we simply mean that in those works are to be noted characters, actions, ideas, phrases which Shakespeare has made a part of the play. But he has done so in his own way, and his finished product, as a work of art, is something quite different from any one of his sources, considered singly, or from all of them, considered together.

For the Bond-story Shakespeare used *The Adventures of Gianetto* by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, in a collection of Italian stories, called *Il Pecorone*. This work was written in 1378 and published at Milan in 1558. It is natural to suppose that Shakespeare became acquainted with it through an English translation. From the story of Gianetto he got the idea of the bond, the name of Portia's residence, and the scheme for freeing Antonio.

The Caskets-story is found in the *Gesta Romanorum* (Deeds of the Romans), a collection of Latin stories compiled at about the end of the thirteenth century. In the story of the Roman Emperor, Ancelmus, we are told how three vessels of gold, silver, and lead were used to deter-

mine whether the daughter of the King of Naples was worthy to marry the son of Ancelmus. In this story, however, it is the lady who makes the choice.

For the Lorenzo-Jessica story Shakespeare may have used the collection of stories similar to *Il Pecorone* by Massuccio di Salerno. The fourteenth story deals with the elopement of the daughter of a Neapolitan miser. Here, as in the play, the father is robbed, and the daughter escapes with her lover aided by a servant as Jessica is aided by Launcelot.

The incident of the rings—the basis of Act Five—was suggested by *The Adventures of Gianetto*.

The incident of Shylock's whetting his knife "so earnestly" is thought to be derived from an old ballad called "A new Song, shewing the crueltie of Gernutus, a Jewe who, lending to a merchant an hundred crowns, would have a pound of his fleshe, because he could not pay him at the time appointed." In this crude production Gernutus refers to the bond as a "merry jest" (see I, iii, 137); he does not delay "to get a sergiant" (see III, i, 110); and he appears in court with "whetted blade in hand" (see IV, i, 120).

In 1579 Stephen Gosson (1554-1624), actor, dramatist, and, later, a minister, brought out *The Schoole of Abuse*, a violent attack on the drama. Gosson, who was not liberal with his praise, speaks well of a play, *The Jew*, "representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and bloody mindes of Usurers." This play has not come down to us, but as the greediness of worldly choosers might refer to Morocco and Arragon, and the bloody minds of usurers,

to Shylock and the Bond-story, it is very possible that Shakespeare may have derived some hints from it. At any rate Gosson's reference shows that there was a play before *The Merchant of Venice*, which combined the two main plots of Shakespeare's play.

Another work which Shakespeare may have used is *The Orator: Handling a hundred severall Discourses, in forme of Declamations*: etc. of Alexander Silvayn, written in French, and translated into English by Anthony Munday (1553-1633) under the name of Lazarus Piot. The title-page is dated 1596, but it may not have been published until 1597. Declamation number ninety-five tells "Of a Jew, who would for his debt have a pound of the flesh of a Christian." The introductory argument, the fact that the bond is for three months, and the use by the Jew of expressions similar to some used by Shylock, suggest that Shakespeare may have been familiar with the work, but, on the other hand, there are many points where *The Orator* and *The Merchant of Venice* disagree.

III. Date of Composition, Early References, and Publication

It is not possible to state with exactness just when Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*. Various arguments have been put forward for certain years, but there are strong and weak points for each case. If the "Venesyon comodey" (Venetian comedy) referred to by Philip Henslowe, a prominent theatrical manager, in his *Diary*, is Shakespeare's play, then it must have been composed in 1594, as Henslowe's reference is under date of August 25, 1594, and he speaks of it as a new play. But nothing is known of this work, and therefore it is danger-

ous to build up an argument on it. Edmund Malone (1741-1812) one of the great 18th century critics of Shakespeare, saw in Portia's "Even as the flourish when true subjects bow to a new-crowned monarch" (III, ii, 49), a reference to the coronation, on February 27, 1594, of King Henry IV of France, and Antonio's statement to Salarino, "nor is my whole estate upon the fortune of this present year" (I, i, 43), has seemed to some students to refer to 1596, a year noted for financial unsoundness throughout Europe. But arguments such as these are very uncertain, and for other years which have been proposed there are other objections. With regard to the years 1594 and 1596, there are considerations which favor each, but there is almost general agreement that 1596 is the safer date.

The first mention we have of *The Merchant of Venice* is that which occurs in the Stationers' Register, under date of July 22, 1598, in the name of James Roberts, a printer. The play is mentioned again in the same year by Francis Meres (1565-1647) a clergyman and a schoolmaster, in his *Palladis Tamia*, a sketch of English Literature, Painting, and Music. Meres mentions twelve plays by Shakespeare, six comedies and six tragedies. The comedies named are *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.

The play was first published by Thomas Heyes in 1600 in the form of a quarto, that is, a book in which the sheets are folded twice. Heyes had registered the play on October 28, 1600.

Another quarto edition of *The Merchant of Venice* also bears the date of 1600 on the title page, and the name of James Roberts as the printer. This edition was long thought to have appeared earlier than the Heyes edition, that is, it was regarded as the First Quarto. Recent investigations, however, have shown that the so-called Roberts Quarto was printed, not in 1600, as the title-page declares, but in 1619, and that it was printed, not by Roberts, but by Jaggard, the publisher of the famous First Folio edition of Shakespeare in 1623. In other words, the Heyes edition, usually regarded as the Second Quarto, is now known to be the first, and the Roberts edition, usually regarded as the First Quarto, is now known to be the second.

In 1637 the Third Quarto was published by Laurence Heyes, the son of Thomas. The Fourth Quarto was published by William Leake in 1652, in which year Cromwell's Parliament was considering the question of re-admitting Jews (expelled by Edward I in 1290) into England.

IV. Shakespeare's Stage

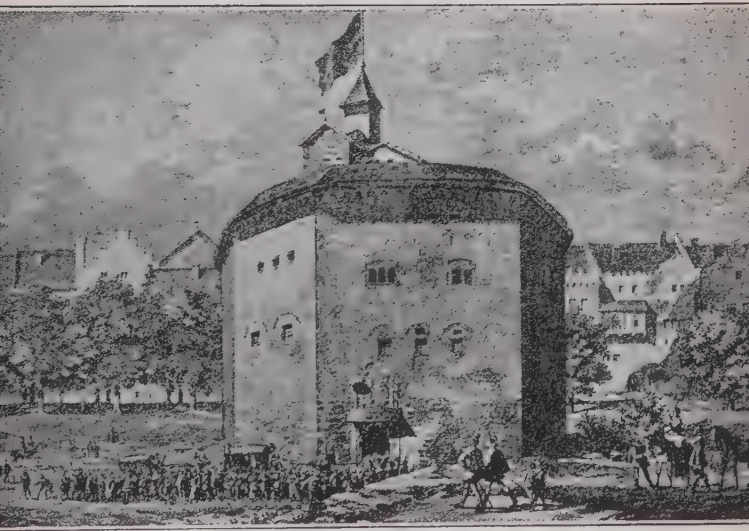
In order to appreciate fully the plays of Shakespeare, it is important to remember that he wrote them to suit certain definite conditions, conditions which were made necessary by the stage on which the plays were to be produced. At first sight, it would not seem that the size, shape, or construction of a stage—which is a purely physical matter—could have a great deal to do with the type or kind of a play—which is a work of art. But Shakespeare's plays were written for the theater of his time, and we shall be able to understand them more

clearly if we have some idea of the differences between an Elizabethan playhouse and a theater of the present day.

In a modern theater the audience sits in front of, and is separated from, the stage. In the theaters where Shakespeare's plays were first performed, the greater part of the audience stood around the stage, just as people nowadays stand (or sit) around a speaker or musical artist on a platform. This means that the relation between the actor and audience was much closer, much more intimate, much more sympathetic in Shakespeare's theater than in ours.

Our stage is called the "picture-frame" stage because the spectators, sitting out in front, see before them a huge frame; and the actors, moving within it, in entering and leaving the stage, appear as figures in a living moving-picture. This restricted area, which limits and sets off the movements of the actors, gives an unnatural and artificial air to the entire performance. Not often is it possible for a spectator to forget that there is a gulf between himself and the actors. But in the "platform" stage of Shakespeare's day, with the audience surrounding it on three sides and standing almost on a level with the actors, there was no such gulf. In a very real sense, therefore, the Elizabethan spectator was a part of the play which was being acted out before his eyes. As a result, much that seems artificial to us, because we are cut off from it, seemed perfectly natural to them.

We have a "drop curtain," which descends at the end of each scene or act. The Elizabethan theater had, instead, a side curtain suspended at some distance from the



THE GLOBE THEATER

The flag indicates that a play is to be performed.

bank of the stage. The stage was divided into two parts, an inner, or full stage, and an outer, or half stage. When the side curtain was closed or drawn to, the outer part of the stage could be seen by the audience; when the side curtain was drawn back, the inner stage could be seen. A theater which uses a drop curtain calls for a play of a certain type; a theater which uses a side curtain requires a play of a different type. A dramatist with the former theater in mind is under the necessity, if his play is to be a "hit," of working up to a "big moment," an exciting situation for the end of each act. A dramatist writing for the latter theater is under no such necessity. In a Shakespearian play—where the drop curtain is not employed—the action is more continuous and is not interrupted by the descending of a curtain at the end of each act, because, strictly speaking, there are no "acts" as we use the term. That is, there are (as in modern plays) no separate units of action (three, four, or five, as the case may be) each having a separate climax. The interest, or suspense, grows until the central point of the play is reached (in *The Merchant of Venice* this point is Bassanio's successful choice); then we have a period in which the suspense is slightly lessened, but not so much as to make us cease wondering what is going to happen; and finally we have another climax, a minor or secondary one, at the close of the play.

From a stage direction that appears frequently in Elizabethan plays, it is clear that there was a gallery above the stage. It was needed where a character appeared "above" or "aloft" either on a wall, or at a window. Such a

Marlowe's Barabas is a Jewish money-lender and a hater of Christians, but he is no Shylock. With all his hatred, his scheming, his passion for revenge, Shylock was meant to be, and remains, a man, a human being. Barabas is a savage monster, devoid of all human feelings. Shylock is made understandable to us by the sufficient motives which explain his hatred, but Barabas is an out-and-out villain (like Shakespeare's Richard III) without any virtues to redeem his vices.

Abigail, Barabas' daughter, recalls Jessica in two respects; she falls in love with a Christian, and she informs against her father. For the latter act she has more cause than Jessica. Shylock loves his daughter, but Barabas poisons Abigail.

In short, the two plays resemble each other simply in that the central character is a Jew placed among his enemies. Here and there a few phrases, or situations, of *The Jew of Malta* seem to be echoed in *The Merchant of Venice*, but at this point the resemblance ends. Barabas is a caricature of a monster; Shylock, a portrait of a man.

VII. Shylock and Portia on the Stage

It is often said that every actor—he be tragedian or a comedian—has felt at some time in his life a very keen desire to play the rôle of Hamlet. The same might be said with almost as much force for the part of Shylock. From the point of view of the number of lines he speaks and the number of appearances he makes, Shylock is not what the actor calls a "fat" part. But he dominates the five scenes in which he *does* appear, and his "asides," his

speech beginning "Signior Antonio, many a time and oft," his passionate defence of the Jew as a human being, his heart-rending cry to Tubal, his defiance of the Duke, his unanswerable arguments in the Trial Scene, and even his final exit—all these offer opportunities dear to the actor's heart.

Almost all great actors, and some who have no title to be considered great, have interpreted the rôle. Richard Burbage (1567-1619), a famous Elizabethan actor, and the original Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Richard III, is believed to have been the first Shylock. In accordance with the sentiment of his day—a day which lasted for many years—he played it as a comic rôle, with a red wig.

Charles Macklin, an Irishman, was the first actor to portray Shylock as a tragic character, in 1741. His success was complete and it meant the end of the tradition that the part was one for a comedian. Other famous Shylocks have been John Henderson, Thomas Sheridan, father of the author of *The School for Scandal*, George Frederick Cooke, John Philip Kemble (who sometimes played Antonio), Stephen Kemble, his brother, Edmund Kean, who aroused the high enthusiasm of Hazlitt the essayist, William Charles Macready, who emphasized the human side, Samuel Phelps, and Edwin Booth, the brother of John Wilkes Booth, a third-rate actor, who shot Abraham Lincoln.

In more recent times, Shylock has been played by Sir Henry Irving, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Richard Mansfield, Jacob Adler, and Arthur Bouchier. Among actors, still living, who have given us different conceptions of

Shylock on English and American stages, may be mentioned Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Sir Frank R. Benson, Oscar Asche, Michael Sherbrooke, Robert B. Mantell, Baliol Holloway, a member of the famous "Old Vic" in London, a theater devoted entirely to the production of Shakespeare's plays, Walter Hampden, Fritz Leiber, David Warfield, of *The Auctioneer* and *The Music Master*, and George Arliss, well known on both sides of the water.

Among those who have donned Portia's robes may be mentioned Anne Bracegirdle, charming Margaret ("Peg") Woffington (1718-1760), the idol of her day and the heroine of Charles Reade's novel, *Peg Woffington* (1852), Catherine ("Kitty") Clive, who played the part as a "low-comedy" role, Hannah Pritchard (who also played Nerissa), Frances Abington, the original Lady Teazle in *The School for Scandal*, Sarah Kemble, sister of John Philip, better known as Mrs. Siddons, the "Tragic Muse," Maria Macklin, Charles Macklin's daughter, Ellen Terry, Violet Vanbrugh, and Edith Evans.

VIII. Time-scheme of *The Merchant of Venice*

Act 1

Scene 1. Morning. (See line 65.)

Scene 2. Morning. The same day. (Scenes 1 and 2 may be supposed to take place at the same time.)

Scene 3. Morning, a little later than Scene 1. (See line 183, Scene 1.)

Act 2

Scene 1. Morning, soon after Act 1, Scene 2.

Scene 2. About two weeks later. Afternoon, before
5. (See line 106.)

Scene 3. A little later, the same day.

Scene 4. The same afternoon, 4 o'clock. (See line 8.)

Scene 5. The same day, before supper time. Between
4 and 5. (See line 11.)

Scene 6. The same day, evening. Before 9 o'clock.
(See line 63.)

Scene 7. The same day, afternoon of Scene 1. "After
dinner." (See line 44, Scene 1.)

Scene 8. Morning. The next day. (See line 27.)

Scene 9. Afternoon. The day after Scene 8.

Act 3

Scene 1. A little less than three months after Act 1,
Scene 1. (See lines 2, 3, 9, 62, in Act 1,
Scene 3.)

Scene 2. Two weeks later. (See line 110, Scene 1.)

Scene 3. The same day.

Scene 4. The same day, later. (See line 249, Act 5.)

Scene 5. The next day, afternoon. Before dinner.
See lines 38, 72.)

Act 4

Scene 1. The same day as Act 3, Scene 5.

Scene 2. A few minutes later.

Act 5

Scene 1. The next day. Late at night. "Before the
break of day." (See opening lines, and line
29.)



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BALIEL HOLLOWAY AS SHERLOCK

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

ANTONIO, a Merchant of Venice

SALARINO, { young Venetians, friends of Antonio and
SALANIO, { Bassanio.

BASSANIO, Kinsman of Antonio, and Suitor to Portia.

LORENZO, a young Venetian, in love with Jessica.

GRATIANO, a young Venetian, in love with Nerissa.

PORTIA, a wealthy orphan, of Belmont.

NERISSA, Portia's waiting-maid and companion.

A Servingman of Portia's.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew, and a Venetian money-lender.

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, a Moor, Suitor to Portia.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a clownish servant, Servant to Shylock,
and, later, to Bassanio.

OLD GOBBO, a simple Countryman, Launcelot's Father.

LEONARDO, Bassanio's Servant.

JESSICA, Shylock's Daughter, in love with Lorenzo.

A Servitor (servant) of Portia's.

THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, a Spaniard, Suitor to Portia.

A Messenger of Bassanio's.

A Servant of Antonio's.

TUBAL, a Jew, Shylock's Friend.

The Musicians (in Act III, Scene 2).

A Singer (of the song, "Tell me where is fancy bred,"
etc.).

SALERIO, a Venetian messenger.

A Jailer, in charge of Antonio.

BALTHASAR, Portia's Servant.

THE DUKE OF VENICE.

The Magnificoes of Venice.

STEPHANO, Portia's Servant.

The Musicians (in Act V).

Attendants of Portia, Morocco, Arragon, Bassanio, and
the Duke of Venice.

Officers of the Court of Justice.

Scene of Action: Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont,
on the mainland near Venice, Portia's home, on the
Continent.

ACT I

SCENE I. *Venice. A street*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO

ANTONIO. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 't is made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn; 5
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me
That I have much ado to know myself.

SALARINO. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood, 10
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

1. **sooth:** truth.
2. **It:** Antonio's sadness.
3. **came by:** got; literally, "came near."
5. **I am to:** I am yet to.
6. **want-wit:** stupid fellow.
7. **ado:** trouble.
9. **argosies:** large merchant ships.
10. **signiors:** lords, aristocratic gentlemen.
burghers: free citizens, the commercial class, townsmen.
flood: sea.
11. **pageants:** the movable stages on wheels used in performing the old mystery plays; also the plays themselves.
12. **overpeer:** overlook.
petty traffickers: smaller merchant ships, as contrasted with the argosies.
13. **curtsy:** bow. The waves caused by the huge argosies would cause the smaller vessels to rock.
14. **woven wings:** canvas sails.

SALANIO. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth, 15
 The better part of my affections would
 Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
 Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
 Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;
 And every object that might make me fear 20
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
 Would make me sad.

SALARINO. My wind, cooling my broth,
 Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
 What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
 I should not see the sandy hour-glass run, 25
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,
 And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
 Vailing her high top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial. Should I go to church,
 And see the holy edifice of stone, 30
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,

15. **venture**: merchandise sent to sea.

16. **affections**: feelings.

17. **still**: always, constantly. In Shakespeare, *still* always has this meaning.

18. **sits**: blows. A proverb tells us "A straw shows how the wind blows."

19. **roads**: anchorages.

21. **out of doubt**: without doubt. Antonio uses the phrase in I, i, 155.

22. **wind**: breath.

23. **blow me to**: chill me into.

25. **hour-glass**: a glass filled with sand, used for calculating time. In Shakespeare's day they were very common, both in private residences and in churches. In the latter they were placed on iron stands close to the pulpit so that the minister might time himself in the length of his sermon.

26. **flats**: sand-banks.

27. **Andrew**: a fairly common name for a ship.

dock'd: embedded.

28. **vailing**: lowering, striking.

29. **burial**: burial place, i. e. the sands.

31. **straight**: immediately.

Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks;
And, in a word, but even now worth this, 35
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this; and shall I lack the thought,
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise. 40

ANTONIO. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad. 45

SALARINO. Why, then you are in love.

ANTONIO. Fie, fie!

SALARINO. Not in love neither. Then let us say you are
sad,

Because you are not merry; and 't were as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus, 50
Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,

32. **Touching but:** (Should they) but touch.

35-6. *This* refers to the spices and silks of the previous lines. The meaning, "at one moment worth a great deal, and at the next, worth nothing," is made clear on the stage by the motions of the actor.

42. **bottom:** ship.

50. **Janus:** An ancient Roman god, represented with two faces looking in opposite directions. He was the guardian of gates and doors. His name survives in *January*, the opening of the year. Salanio is referring to two classes of men, those who "laugh like parrots," and those of "vinegar aspect."

52. **peep through their eyes:** screw up their eyes in laughter.

And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
 And other of such vinegar aspect,
 That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile, 55
 Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO

SALANIO. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kins-
 man,

Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
 We leave you now with better company.

SALARINO. I would have stay'd till I had made you
 merry, 60

If worthier friends had not prevented me.

ANTONIO. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
 I take it, your own business calls on you,
 And you embrace the occasion to depart.

SALARINO. Good morrow, my good lords. 65

BASSANIO. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh?
 say, when?

54. **other:** others. In Elizabethan English, *other* was used for both the singular and the plural. *Others* was introduced later as a plural form to prevent confusion.

56. **Nestor:** the oldest and most serious of the Greek heroes in Homer's *Iliad*, was the King of Pylos and Messenia. He fought in the Trojan War. In a long life he acquired great knowledge, and his name has become a symbol for wisdom and gravity. An old man who has reached eminence in his profession or calling is referred to as a Nestor (of medicine, law, etc.). Homer's Nestor reminds one somewhat of Polonius in *Hamlet*.

57. **comes:** the singular form is used to agree with Bassanio. As Salanio begins to speak, Bassanio is the only one he sees; he adds the names of the others as they come in behind Bassanio.

60. **I would . . . merry:** To make Antonio *merry* is one of Gratiano's chief aims.

61. **prevented:** anticipated.

62. **Your . . . regard:** Your value is very high in my esteem. Antonio, always courteous to his friends, politely turns aside the self-depreciation of Salarino.

64. **embrace the occasion:** take the opportunity.

65. **morrow:** morning.

66. **when shall we laugh:** when shall we meet again for merri-
 ment?

You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

SALARINO. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[*Exeunt* SALARINO and SALANIO]

LORENZO. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,

We two will leave you; but, at dinner-time, 70

I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

BASSANIO. I will not fail you.

GRATIANO. You look not well, Signior Antonio;

You have too much respect upon the world:

They lose it that do buy it with much care. 75

Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

ANTONIO. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;

A stage, where every man must play a part,

And mine a sad one.

GRATIANO. Let me play the fool:

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come; 80

And let my liver rather heat with wine

67. *exceeding strange*: unfriendly.

must it be so: do you really have to go?

68. *We'll make . . . yours*. We'll see to it that we are at leisure to wait upon you when *you* are at leisure.

70. *We two*: One less sensitive than Gratiano might have taken this as a hint that it was time to go, but he remains—to deliver a long speech. Is that the reason for his remaining, or did Shakespeare wish here to indicate a trait in his character?

74-5. *You have . . . care*. You think too much about what the world will say of you, and you lose the world's pleasures by buying its good opinion at such a sacrifice.

77. *but as the world*: at its real value.

78. *A stage . . . part*: Shakespeare has the same idea in *As You Like It*, in the speech of Jacques, Act II, Scene 7; in *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 5; in *King Lear*, Act IV, Scene 6, and in the 15th *Sonnet*. As a man of the theater, Shakespeare thought of life in terms of the stage, but this comparison is not new with him, as it was a commonplace among the Elizabethan dramatists and poets.

79. *play the fool*: act the jester. The professional fool or clown plays an important part in Shakespeare's dramas. The phrase is appropriate to Gratiano.

80. *old wrinkles*: The wrinkles of old age.

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
 Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
 Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
 Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice 85
 By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio,—
 I love thee, and it is my love that speaks,—
 There are a sort of men whose visages
 Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;
 And do a wilful stillness entertain, 90
 With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
 As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,
 An when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!'
 O my Antonio, I do know of these, 95
 That therefore only are reputed wise
 For saying nothing; when, I am very sure,
 If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,

82. **mortifying**: producing death. The reference is to the old medical belief that sighs or groans caused the sufferer to lose blood.

84. **Sit . . . alabaster**: sit motionless like the alabaster figure on the monument.

85. **creep . . . jaundice**: a disease of the liver, produced by violent mental emotion. The whole passage shows Shakespeare's medical knowledge.

88. **sort**: kind.

89. **Do . . . pond**: whose faces take on a grave expression as unchanging as the surface of a pool of stagnant water.

90. **And . . . entertain**: keep a determined silence.

91. **opinion**: *reputation*. Gratiano uses the word again in this speech.

92. **conceit**: thought, power of thinking.

93. **As one who**.

Sir Oracle: one who pretends to speak as the representative of a god, that is, with the highest authority. The *Sir* is used with a mixture of contempt and respect. Ulysses, one of the Grecian commanders, in *Troilus and Cressida*, refers to "Sir Valour," I, iii, 176; Leontes, the suspicious husband of *The Winter's Tale*, sneers at an imaginary "Sir Smile," I, ii, 196, and another Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan, brother to Prospero, in *The Tempest*, refers to Gonzalo as "Sir Prudence," II, i, 286.

95-9. **O . . . fools**. I know some men who are considered wise simply because they say nothing; if they spoke, they would talk so

Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.

I'll tell thee more of this another time: 100

But fish not, with this melancholy bait,

For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.

Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:

I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

LORENZO. Well, we will leave you, then, till dinner-
time. 105

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,

For Gratiano never lets me speak.

GRATIANO. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

ANTONIO. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear. 110

GRATIANO. Thanks, i' faith; for silence is only com-
mendable

In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.

[*Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO*]

ANTONIO. Is that any thing now?

BASSANIO. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing,
more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two
grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek

foolishly that their listeners would call them fools, and so bring upon
themselves the condemnation visited on him who should call his brother
a fool. See *Proverbs*, xvii, 28, and *Matthew*, v, 22.

101-2. **But . . . opinion.** Do not use your gravity as a bait to win
the reputation of wisdom which is not worth any more than a gudgeon.
A *gudgeon* is a small freshwater fish. It is greedy and easily swallows
bait.

fool: foolish.

104. The reference is to the custom of the Puritan ministers of the
time.

108. **moe:** more.

110. **grow:** become.

110. **gear:** matter, affair, occasion.

112. **neat's tongue:** ox-tongue.

113. Is there any sense to what Gratiano has just said?

114. Gratiano talks a lot of nonsense.

all day ere you find them; and when you have them, they
are not worth the search. 118

ANTONIO. Well, tell me now, what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage, 120
That you to-day promis'd to tell me of?

BASSANIO. 'T is not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance: 125
Nor do I now make moan to be abridg'd
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is, to come fairly off from the great debts,
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gag'd. To you, Antonio, 130
I owe the most, in money and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburthen all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

ANTONIO. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it; 135
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assur'd,

124. **something**: somewhat.

124-5. **more swelling port**: richer style. Bassanio has been living beyond his means, as people still do.

126-7. I do not complain because I have to give up my grand style of living.

128. **to come fairly off from**: to honorably discharge.

129. **time**: youth.

prodigal: reckless, wasteful.

130. **gag'd**: engaged, pledged.

132. **warranty**: confidence.

133. **unburthen**: confide, expose.

137. **Within . . . honour**: within the limit of what may be considered honorable; if it be an action not inconsistent with. See *Julius Cæsar*, I, ii, 84-7.

My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

BASSANIO. In my school-days, when I had lost one
shaft, 140

I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight
The selfsame way with more advised watch,
To find the other forth; and, by adventuring both,
I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence. 145
I owe you much; and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost: but, if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both, 150
Or bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

ANTONIO. You know me well; and herein spend but
time

To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong 155

138-9. All my means are at your disposal, for your needs.

140. **shaft:** arrow.

141. **his . . . flight:** another arrow from the same batch, made to carry the same distance.

his: its. In Shakespeare's time, *his* was used for the neuter, as well as for the masculine form.

142. **advised:** careful.

143. **forth:** out. See II, v, 11.

144. **childhood proof:** childish experiment.

145. **pure innocence:** pure folly, or childishness.

148. **self:** same.

150. **or . . . or:** either . . . or.

153-4. You waste time to appeal to my love in such a roundabout manner, instead of coming to the point at once.

circumstance: circumlocution. Bassanio, conscious that his arguments are weak and lame, has been "beating about the bush."

155-7. You wrong me now more in having any doubt of my love than in wasting all I have.

In making question of my uttermost,
 Than if you had made waste of all I have:
 Then do but say to me what I should do,
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,
 And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak. 160

BASSANIO. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
 And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
 Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
 I did receive fair speechless messages.
 Her name is Portia; nothing undervalu'd 165
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
 For the four winds blow in from every coast
 Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece; 170
 Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.
 O my Antonio, had I but the means
 To hold a rival place with one of them,
 I have a mind presages me such thrift, 175
 That I should questionless be fortunate.

ANTONIO. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;

160. **prest:** ready.

161. **richly left:** who has been left a wealthy orphan.

163. **sometimes:** once, formerly.

165. **nothing undervalu'd:** not less in value.

166. **Brutus' Portia:** the daughter of Cato, and wife of Marcus Brutus, the only noble-minded conspirator against Julius Cæsar, in Shakespeare's play of that name.

170. **like . . . fleece:** Jason, with fifty famous Greek heroes, sailed to Colchis (on the eastern coast of the Black Sea) to recover the Golden Fleece, which was constantly guarded by a sleeping dragon. Aided by Media, the daughter of Æetes, the King of Colchis, Jason killed the dragon and secured the fleece.

175. **presages:** foretells.

thrift: success.

Neither have I money, nor commodity,
 To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
 Try what my credit can in Venice do: 180
 That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
 Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
 Where money is; and I no question make,
 To have it of my trust, or for my sake. [Exeunt] 185

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

PORTIA. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is awearry
 of this great world.

NERISSA. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries
 were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are:
 and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with
 too much, as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean
 happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity
 comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

PORTIA. Good sentences, and well pronounc'd. 9

NERISSA. They would be better, if well follow'd.

178. **commodity**: merchandise.

179. **a present sum**: a sum at present.

181. **rack'd**: strained, stretched.

183. **presently**: immediately, without delay.

184-5. Either on my credit as a merchant, or from some one who
 will lend it as a personal favor.

6-7. It is no small happiness to occupy a middle position in life,
 i.e. to have neither an extreme of misery nor an extreme of happiness.
 This use of a word (mean . . . mean) with double meanings is called
 punning or quibbling. It is a habit of which Shakespeare and his
 fellow writers are very fond.

7-8. **superfluity** . . . **longer**: one who has too much and lives too
 well gets white hairs quicker, and grows old and dies.

9. **sentences**: maxims.

PORTIA. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood; but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none? 24

NERISSA. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men, at their death, have good inspirations: therefore the lottery that he hath devis'd in these three chests of gold, silver,

12. **chapels . . . churches:** small churches would be large ones.

13. **It is . . . instructions:** Ophelia, in *Hamlet*, gives her brother, Laertes, the same advice, I, iii, 45-51. In *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer, the Father of English Poetry, tells us of a parson who "Cristes loore and his Apostles twelve He taughte, and first he folwed it hym selve."

16. **The brain . . . blood:** the brain may make laws to control the passions.

17. **a hot . . . decree:** young blood is not restrained by cold wisdom. Berowne, one of the Lords attending on King Ferdinand, expresses the same idea in *Love's Labour's Lost*, "Young blood doth not obey an old decree," IV, iii, 217.

18. **good counsel** is a cripple because it is slow and careful in its actions as compared with the lively hare.

19. **reasoning:** conversing. Portia means that talking wittily will not help her to secure a husband, which is her problem.

22. **will . . . by the will:** Here Shakespeare is punning again; the first *will* means the privilege of choosing; the second *will* means will and testament.

24. **nor refuse none:** the double negative is used for emphasis. The form is frequent in Elizabethan English.

25. **holy men . . . inspirations:** For a similar idea, see Hotspur's dying speech in the First Part of *Henry IV*, V, iv, 83-5, and the dying speech of John of Gaunt in *Richard II*, II, i, 31-2.

and lead,—whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you,—will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come? 32

PORTIA. I pray thee, over-name them; and, as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

NERISSA. First, there is the Neapolitan prince. 36

PORTIA. Ay, that 's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

NERISSA. Then is there the County Palatine. 40

PORTIA. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, 'If you will not have me, choose.' He hears merry tales, and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-

31. **these princely suitors:** The famous Samuel Johnson thought that Shakespeare had Queen Elizabeth in mind here. Although never won, Elizabeth was often wooed, and her excessive vanity would be gratified by this scene.

33. **over-name:** name them over.

35. **level at:** guess at. Cleopatra took her life, because she *levell'd* at Cæsar's purpose, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 334.

37. **colt:** Shakespeare is still playing with the double meanings of a word, *colt*, a young horse, and also a lively young fellow. The Neapolitans were known for their fine horsemanship.

38. **appropriation:** additional quality.

40. **County:** Count.

42. If you will not have me, choose (someone else). Portia means that the Count thinks so well of himself as to feel that *she* will be the loser if he does not marry her.

43. **the weeping philosopher:** Heraclitus of Ephesus, a Greek philosopher who lived about 500 B. C. He saw only the gloomy side of life, just as Democritus of Abdera, the laughing philosopher, saw the happier side.

44. **sadness:** seriousness.

45. **death's-head:** skull.

head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these.
God defend me from these two! 47

NERISSA. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur
Le Bon? 49

PORTIA. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a
man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he!
why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a better
bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine: he is every
man in no man: if a throstle sing, he falls straight a-caper-
ing; he will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry
him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise
me, I would forgive him; for, if he love me to madness,
I shall never requite him. 58

NERISSA. What say you then to Falconbridge, the young
baron of England? 60

PORTIA. You know I say nothing to him; for he under-
stands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French,
nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that
I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper
man's picture; but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-

48. **by:** concerning, about.

52. **he hath . . . Neapolitan's:** he is more enthusiastic than the
Neapolitan about the good points of his horse.

a . . . habit: a bad habit developed to a higher degree.

53-4. **he is . . . man:** he has some of the traits of every man, but
he has not those which belong to a real man.

54. **throstle:** thrush.

56. **I . . . husbands:** because he is "every man in no man."

59. **What say you to:** What do you say *about*?

62. **he hath . . . Italian:** In Shakespeare's time, as in ours,
Englishmen were known for their lack of familiarity with languages
other than their own, and it was customary to jest at their weakness.
Shakespeare's satire, however, is kindly, as he himself was not too
well versed in these tongues.

64. **a . . . picture:** the picture of a handsome man.

65. **dumb-show:** pantomime, a theatrical performance in which the
actors are silent.

show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour every where. 68

NERISSA. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour? 70

PORTIA. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrow'd a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and seal'd under for another. 74

NERISSA. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew? 76

PORTIA. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober; and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk; when he is best, he is a little worse than a man; and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him. 82

NERISSA. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him. 85

PORTIA. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee,

66. **suit**ed: dressed.

doublet: jacket.

67. **round hose**: very tight knee-breeches.

bonnet: with us, used to refer to a woman's hat; in Shakespeare's time, it was applied to both sexes.

69. **the Scottish lord**: the 1600 Quartos have *Scottish*, but in the 1623 Folio this was changed to *other* lord, in order to avoid offending a Scotsman, James I, who was then King of England.

73-4. **the Frenchman . . . surety**: as first pointed out by the Reverend William Warburton, an 18th Century Shakespearean critic, the reference is to the frequent promises of help that France made to Scotland in its quarrels with England.

75. **How like you**: How would the young German suit you?

81. **make shift**: contrive.

set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket; for, if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I 'll be married to a sponge. 90

NERISSA. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets. 96

PORTIA. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtain'd by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure. 102

NERISSA. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar, and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat? 105

PORTIA. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think he was so call'd. 107

87. **Rhenish:** Rhine.

contrary: wrong. Portia says this in play, as Nerissa does not know which is the right casket. Does this passage imply that there were only *two* caskets in an earlier version of the comedy?

95. **sort:** method.

imposition: terms made by your father.

97. **Sibylla:** the word *sibyl*, which means a prophetess, is here used as a proper noun. There were ten sibyls, but Shakespeare has in mind the most famous one, the Sibyl of Cumae in Southern Italy. Apollo promised that he would grant any petition she made of him. She asked that she might be allowed to live for as many years as the number of the grains of sand which she was holding, hence Portia's *old*.

98. **Diana:** the daughter of Jupiter and Latona. She was the goddess of the moon, of the hunt, and of chastity. See the Duke's speech to Viola, in *Twelfth Night*, I, iv, 31.

99. **parcel:** group.

106. **as I think:** Portia remembers Bassanio's name perfectly well,

NERISSA. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes look'd upon, was the best deserving a fair lady. 110

PORTIA. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man

How now! what news? 113

SERVING-MAN. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco; who brings word, the prince his master will be here to-night. 117

PORTIA. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me. 122

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [Exeunt]

but, after having given herself away, she pretends that she is not certain of it. It is a human touch, and a very pretty lie, almost as pretty as Rosalind's "Did you call, Sir?" in *As You Like It*, I, ii, 270.

109. **foolish:** fond.

114. **The four strangers:** Nerissa has mentioned *six*. Either Shakespeare has made a careless slip, or perhaps there were only four suitors in an earlier version of the play. It may be that Falconbridge and the Scottish lord were added later.

115. **forerunner:** messenger.

120. **condition:** nature.

121. **shrive:** hear my sins at confession, as a priest.

122. **wive:** marry.

123. **Sirrah:** a form of address used to one's inferiors; here used playfully and affectionately. Shylock uses it, impatiently, to Launcelot, II, v, 37.

SCENE III. *Venice. A public place**Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK*

SHYLOCK. Three thousand ducats, — well.

BASSANIO. Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK. For three months, — well.

BASSANIO. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound. 5

SHYLOCK. Antonio shall become bound, — well.

BASSANIO. May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

SHYLOCK. Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound. 10

BASSANIO. Your answer to that.

SHYLOCK. Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

SHYLOCK. Ho! no, no, no, no: my meaning, in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand me, that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at

1. **ducat**: a gold coin worth about 9 shillings (\$2.25). As the value of the ducat was not the same in all countries, it is difficult to state exactly how much 3000 ducats would be in our currency. The important point is clear: a large sum of money is involved.

5. **bound**: pledged.

7. *May* is used here with its original meaning, *can*. Can you help me?

12. **good**: financially sound. As the next line shows, Bassanio understands *good* in the moral sense, as referring to character.

16. **sufficient as surety for the sum involved**.

in supposition: doubtful, uncertain, because, as Shylock explains, they are exposed to various dangers.

17. **Tripolis**: a port in Syria, near Beirut.

18. **the Rialto**: the Exchange in Venice, where the merchants met to carry on their business; the *Wall Street* of New York.

Mexico, a fourth for England; and other ventures he hath, squander'd abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates: and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats;—I think I may take his bond. 25

BASSANIO. Be assur'd you may.

SHYLOCK. I will be assur'd I may; and, that I may be assur'd, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO. If it please you to dine with us. 29

SHYLOCK. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjur'd the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? —Who is he comes here? 35

Enter ANTONIO

BASSANIO. This is Signior Antonio.

SHYLOCK. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican he looks!

20. **squander'd**: scattered. Shylock does not mean that Antonio is lacking in business sense, but merely that his wealth is distributed.

31. **your prophet**: Jesus.

the Nazarite: i.e. a man of Nazareth. In all English translations of the Bible before the King James Authorised Version of 1611, this term is used for *Nazarene*.

37. **fawning publican**: servile tax-collector; publican, from the Latin *publicanus*. Shakespeare was probably thinking of the story of the Publican and the Pharisee, in *St. Luke*, XVIII, x-xiv. As the publicans in the New Testament were arrogant, rather than fawning, the adjective used by Shylock has puzzled critics. He may have had in mind, not the proud manner of the publicans in the New Testament, but the humble manner of the publican in the Gospel story. The publicans fawned before the Romans, and Shylock may be referring to their attitude towards their conquerors, and not their attitude towards the

I hate him for he is a Christian;
 But more for that, in low simplicity,
 He lends out money gratis and brings down 40
 The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
 If I can catch him once upon the hip,
 I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
 He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,
 Even there where merchants most do congregate, 45
 On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
 Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
 If I forgive him!

BASSANIO. Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK. I am debating of my present store;
 And, by the near guess of my memory, 50
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross
 Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
 Will furnish me. But, soft! how many months
 Do you desire? — [To ANT.] Rest you fair, good signior;
 Your worship was the last man in our mouths. 56

ANTONIO. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow,

Jews. Antonio, approaching an enemy who had good reason to hate him, may have adopted a hesitating manner, also with good reason.

39. **simplicity**: foolishness, goodness of heart.

41. **usance**: interest.

42. **upon the hip**: a figure of speech borrowed from wrestling. To get your opponent *on the hip* is to secure a hold which means victory. Gratiano, gloating over Shylock's defeat, repeats the phrase in IV, i, 329. The sly Iago plans to "have our Michael Cassio on the hip," in *Othello*, II, i, 313.

45. **there where**: i.e. the Rialto.

46. **thrift**: gain. Shylock uses the word frequently.

47. **tribe**: nation, race.

51. **gross**: whole sum.

53. **Tubal**: for the name, see *Genesis*, X, ii.

54. **soft**: stop. An exclamatory word, used by Portia in IV, i, 315.

55. **Rest you fair**: (May God) keep you well. A form of salutation.



SHYLOCK, BASSANIO, AND ANTONIO

SHYLOCK. [*To ANTONIO*] Rest you fair, good signior.

By taking nor by giving of excess,
 Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
 I'll break a custom.—[*To BASS.*] Is he yet possess'd 60
 How much ye would?

SHYLOCK. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO. And for three months.

SHYLOCK. [*To BASS.*] I had forgot,—three months; you
 told me so.

Well, then, your bond; and, let me see; but hear you;
 Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow 65
 Upon advantage.

ANTONIO. I do never use it.

SHYLOCK. When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep,—
 This Jacob from our holy Abram was
 (As his wise mother wrought in his behalf)
 The third possessor; ay, he was the third,— 70

ANTONIO. And what of him? did he take interest?

SHYLOCK. No, not take interest; not, as you would say,
 Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.
 When Laban and himself were compromis'd
 That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied 75
 Should fall as Jacob's hire,

58. **excess:** interest.

59. **ripe:** pressing, urgent.

60. **Is he yet possess'd:** Does he yet know? Is he informed? See Shylock's opening words to the Duke, IV, i, 35.

61. The question is put to Bassanio, but Shylock answers it.

65. **Methought:** it seemed to me. The construction is impersonal, the *me* being in the dative case.

66. **upon advantage:** for profit.

I do never use it: i. e. I am not *used* to it, it is not my custom.

67. **When Jacob:** See *Genesis*, XXVII, XXX.

70. **The third possessor:** Abram was the *first*.

73. **Directly:** exactly.

74. **compromis'd:** agreed.

75. **eanlings:** young lambs.

pied: spotted with various colors like a magpie.

The skilful shepherd pill'd me certain wands;
 He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
 Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time
 Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's. 80
 This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:
 And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

ANTONIO. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob serv'd for;
 A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
 But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven. 85
 Was this inserted to make interest good?
 Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

SHYLOCK. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.
 But note me, signior.

ANTONIO. Mark you this, Bassanio,
 The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose, 90
 An evil soul, producing holy witness,
 Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;
 A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
 O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath! 94

SHYLOCK. Three thousand ducats,—'t is a good round

81. **blest**: successful.

86. **Was this inserted**: Antonio means "Is this (defence of usury) in Scripture, or have you, Shylock, brought it into the conversation to justify the taking of interest?"

87. **is**: the singular form is used because gold and silver are considered as one object, money. So, *it* in the next line.

88. **I make it breed**: the chief argument of the Christian church against usury was that it was against nature to demand interest, because money, being unable to reproduce itself, was *barren*.

89. **note me**: listen to me, pay attention. Antonio's answer—which Shylock ignores—is to turn his back and make insulting remarks about Shylock to Bassanio.

90. **The devil can cite Scripture**: This idea appeared earlier in *The Jew of Malta*, by Christopher Marlowe, who was born in the same year as Shakespeare. Barabas, a villainous Jew, with none of Shylock's humanity, asks "What, bring you *Scripture* to confirm your wrongs?" (I, ii, 111).

sum. Three months from twelve,—then, let me see; the rate —

ANTONIO. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHYLOCK. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft

In the Rialto you have rated me 99

About my moneys and my usances: 100

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;

For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,

And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,

And all for use of that which is mine own. 105

Well then, it now appears you need my help:

Go to, then; you come to me, and you say,

‘Shylock, we would have moneys:’ you say so —

You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,

And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur 110

Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.

What should I say to you? Should I not say,

‘Hath a dog money? is it possible

97. **beholding**: obliged. Shakespeare and other Elizabethan writers seem to have confused the *ing* form with the *en* form, the past participle of strong verbs. Shakespeare always uses *beholding* instead of *beholden*.

101. **Still**: always.

102. **sufferance**: patient endurance of suffering.

badge: mark, characteristic trait. It may also refer to the fact that Shylock in accordance with the laws of Venice, wore a yellow cap.

104. **gaberdine**: a long, loose-flowing gown. Outside of the yellow cap, prescribed by law, Venetian Jews were not compelled to wear any garments that distinguished them from their Gentile neighbors.

105. **that which is mine own**: Shylock develops this point in IV, i, 89–99.

109. **void your rheum**: spit. The French King uses the same phrase in *King Henry V*, III, v, 52.

110. **foot**: kick.

111. **moneys is**: the verb is in the singular form, as *moneys* is used collectively.

A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' or
 Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key, 115
 With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
 Say this,—

'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
 You spurn'd me such a day; another time
 You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies 120
 I 'll lend you thus much moneys'?

ANTONIO. I am as like to call thee so again,
 To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
 As to thy friends; for when did friendship take 125
 A breed of barren metal of his friend?
 But lend it rather to thine enemy;
 Who if he break, thou mayst with better face
 Exact the penalty.

SHYLOCK. Why, look you, how you storm!
 I would be friends with you, and have your love, 130
 Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
 Supply your present wants, and take no doit
 Of usance for my moneys, and you 'll not hear me:
 This is kind I offer.

BASSANIO. This were kindness.

115. **a bondman's key:** the awed tone of a slave.

118. **spit:** the past tense, the verb being originally weak.

126. **breed of barren metal:** interest from unproductive metal.
his: the common form, in Elizabethan writers, for *its*.

128. **break:** fail to keep.

131. **stain'd:** humiliated. Shylock may also be referring to lines 104 and 109.

132. **doit:** a small Dutch coin (duit) worth about half a cent. The proverbial expression "don't care a doit" indicates its trifling value.

134. **kindness.**

This were kindness: with emphasis on *were*. Bassanio is suspicious of Shylock's offer.

SHYLOCK. This kindness will I show:
Go with me to a notary, seal me there 136
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit 140
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

ANTONIO. Content, in faith; I 'll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew. 145

BASSANIO. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I 'll rather dwell in my necessity.

ANTONIO. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months, that 's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return 150
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

SHYLOCK. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others!—Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain 155
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,

137. *single*: with your signature alone, without any sureties. Some critics have suggested that *single* means without witnesses, but we may dismiss this view, as such a bond, as Shylock would know, would not be worth the paper it was written on.

141. *nominated for*: named at.
equal: exact.

144. *Content, in faith*: I accept your terms.

147. *dwell in my necessity*: continue in my need (for money).

153. *teaches*: This appears to be an illustration of the "Northern plural" of Middle English, or as Abbott, in his *Shakesperian Grammar* called it, "the third person plural in *-s*."

As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship: 160

If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;

And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

ANTONIO. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

SHYLOCK. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's:
Give him direction for this merry bond; 165

And I will go and purse the ducats straight;

See to my house, left in the fearful guard

Of an unthrifty knave; and presently

I will be with you.

ANTONIO. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit SHYLOCK*]
The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind. 170

BASSANIO. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

ANTONIO. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day. [*Exeunt*]

159. **muttons, beefs:** With us, these terms are used as names of flesh. In Shakespeare's day they were used for the living animals from which the flesh was taken.

160. **extend:** offer.

161. **it:** this friendship.

so: well and good.

162. **for:** *in return* for.

wrong me not (in the future, as you have done).

166. **put in a purse.**

straight: without delay.

167. **fearful guard:** a guard that causes me fear, i.e. not worthy of trust.

168. **unthrifty knave:** extravagant rascal. But see II, ii, 133-4.

171. **terms** (of the bond).

mind (to interpret the terms).

172. **cause for** dismay.

ACT II

SCENE I. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house*

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO and his train; PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending*

MOROCCO. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles, 5
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime 10
Have lov'd it too. I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

* **Flourish of cornets:** a loud sounding of trumpets to mark the entry of a person of importance, as a prince, warrior, etc.

1. **Mislike:** dislike.

2. **shadow'd livery:** dusky dress.
burnish'd: glowing.

3. The Prince means that his home, Morocco, in North Africa, is on the border of the torrid zone.

4. **fairest in complexion** (*in contrast to Morocco's darkness*).

5. **Phœbus' fire:** the sun. Phœbus was the Roman sun-god.

6. **make incision:** battle for. In Eastern countries, in a more romantic age than ours, lovers used to cut themselves in the arms to drink the healths of their beloved ones in their own blood.

7. **reddest:** red blood was regarded as a sign of courage, as blue blood was of noble birth. Shakespeare uses the superlative form, where we would use the comparative.

9. **fear'd:** scared.

10. **best-regarded:** most highly esteemed.

clime: country.

12. **Except:** unless (by changing my hue, I could win your love).

PORTIA. In terms of choice I am not solely led
 By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
 Besides, the lottery of my destiny 15
 Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
 But, if my father had not scanted me,
 And hedg'd me by his wit, to yield myself
 His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
 Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair 20
 As any comer I have look'd on yet
 For my affection.

MOROCCO. Even for that I thank you:
 Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar
 That slew the Sophy, and a Persian prince 25
 That won three fields of Sultan Solymán,
 I would out-stare the sternest eyes that look,
 Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
 Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
 Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey, 30

13-14. I am not guided only by a dainty discrimination. Portia, means that she does not judge solely by appearances.

17. **scanted**: limited, controlled.

18. **hedg'd . . . wit**: restricted me (in my choice) by his wisdom.

19. **His wife who**: i.e. wife of *him* who.

20. **fair**: equal. Portia means that Morocco has as much chance to win her love as her other suitors. Morocco, not knowing how Portia regards them, takes her courteous remark as a compliment. As Morocco is dark, it is also possible that there is a quibble in Portia's use of *fair*.

24. **scimitar**: an Oriental sword; it is curved and broadens towards the point.

25. **the Sophy**: the Shah of Persia. *Sophy*, like Cæsar for the Emperors of Rome, is not the name of an individual man, but a title, assumed by each Persian shah or emperor.

26. **Sultan Solymán**: Solymán the Magnificent (1490-1566) Sultan of Turkey. He ruled from 1520 until his death. He warred successfully against the Christians, but in 1535 he was defeated by the Persians. Fabian and Sir Toby Belch refer to him, in *Twelfth Night*, II, v, 189, and III, iv, 292-3.

fields: pitched battles.

To win the lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page; 35
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

PORTIA. You must take your chance;
And neither not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear, before you choose, if you choose wrong 40
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advis'd.

MOROCCO. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my
chance.

PORTIA. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

[*Cornets, and exeunt*]

32. **Hercules:** a famous Greek hero, the son of Zeus and Alcmena.

Lichas: the page of Hercules. He brought his master the poisoned shirt of Nessus which caused his death. In his rage and suffering, Hercules threw him into the sea. The story has been told by Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*.

33. (to decide) Which is the stronger man.

33-4. **the greater throw, etc.** By this remark, Morocco shows that he regards the device of the caskets as a mere gamble, and not, as Portia's father meant it, as a test of character.

35. **Alcides:** another name for Hercules. He was the grandson of Alcaeus.

36. **blind fortune:** Fortune is represented as a blindfolded goddess.

40. **wrongly.**

42. **In way of:** with a view to.

advis'd: consider carefully, take your time. "Look before you leap."

43. **Nor will not:** the emphatic double negative. Morocco consents to the terms.

44. **temple:** the small private chapel, attached to Portia's house, where the oath is to be taken. As a Mohammedan, Morocco would understand *temple* better than *chapel*.

MOROCCO.

Good fortune then!

45

To make me blest or curs'd'st among men.

SCENE II. *Venice. A street**Enter LAUNCELOT*

LAUNCELOT. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me, 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,' or 'good Gobbo,' or 'good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.' My conscience says, 'No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,' or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely

46. **blest**: most blest. In Shakespearean grammar, when two adjectives are used in the superlative degree, it often happens that only *one* adjective has the superlative form, which is made to do service for both.

1. **will serve**: will have to. Perhaps, as has been suggested, *not* has dropped out. Launcelot may mean that his conscience prevents him from running away while the fiend encourages him to do so.

2. **The fiend**: Satan.

8. **scorn with thy heels**: a common phrase of the day, meaning to scorn completely. The figure of speech is derived from the manner in which an unbroken horse kicks up its heels, as if in scorn of the (would-be) rider. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Margaret, one of the women waiting on Hero, uses the expression, III, iv. 46-7.

9. **pack**: be off.

Via: An Italian term, common in Elizabethan plays. It was used by sailors in rowing, by oarsmen, and by teamsters to encourage their horses. It is used by our old friend, Falstaff, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, II, ii, 160; by the Dauphin, in *Henry V*, IV, ii, 4, and by Holofernes, the Schoolmaster, in *Love's Labour's Lost* V, i, 160. Its meaning varies with the mood of the speaker. Launcelot uses it to mean *get on with you!*

10. **for the heavens**: for heaven's sake. The humor of the slight oath lies in the idea of Satan's appealing in the name of *heaven*.

12. hanging about the neck of my heart, *in an effort to change its natural inclination*.

to me, 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,'—or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste;—well, my conscience says, 'Launcelot, budge not.' 'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience. 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well'; 'Fiend,' say I, 'you counsel well': to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run.

28

Enter OLD GOBBO, with a basket

GOBBO. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

30

15. **something smack**: the phrase, which comes from Scotland, suggests dishonesty.

something grow to: a phrase applied to the unpleasant taste of burnt milk.

20-21. **God . . . mark**: an apologetic expression, used by Launcelot for mentioning the *devil*.

22-23. **saving your reverence**: like *God bless the mark*, an apologetic expression. It is the English for *salve reverentia tua*.

24. **incarnal**: Launcelot means *incarnate*. The Folios and the First Quarto (Heyes) have *incarnation*. There is no need for correction, as the error is too good to be accidental. Shakespeare has other characters who provide entertainment by mis-handling the language. See Bottom, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and Dogberry, in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Perhaps the most famous example of the type is Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816).

in my conscience: a slight oath, equivalent to *upon my word*.

30. **master Jew's**: The form in which Old Gobbo puts his question may be meant to indicate either (1) that Shylock was a prominent man in Venice, or (2) that to Gobbo, a simple-minded countryman, the only Jew in Venice was the one who employed Launcelot.

LAUNCELOT. [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel-blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

GOBBO. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's? 35

LAUNCELOT. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house. 39

GOBBO. By God's sonties, 't will be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no? 42

LAUNCELOT. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? — [*Aside*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. — Talk you of young Master Launcelot? 45

GOBBO. No master, sir, but a poor man's son: his father, though I say 't, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, God be thank'd, well to live. 48

LAUNCELOT. Well, let his father be what a will, we talk of young Master Launcelot. 50

31. **true-begotten**: legitimate.

32. **sand-blind**: half-blind.

high-gravel-blind: Not satisfied with *sand-blind*, Launcelot invents a stronger degree of blindness.

33. **confusions**: funny tricks, high jinks.

37. **marry**: another weak oath, meaning *truly, indeed*. It is derived from the name of the Virgin *Mary*.

40. **God's sonties**: God's health, from the French *santé*.

44. **raise the waters**: raise a storm, i.e. have some fun.

46. **no master**: Originally, *master* (like *Esquire*) was a title of respect. It was applied to University students, and to those who were able to live without labor. Gobbo knows that his son does not fall in these classes.

47. **though I say it**: Gobbo apologizes for his pride in his poverty. Launcelot repeats the phrase in line 128.

48. **well to live**: well to do. Gobbo is represented as saying that he is *poor and rich*. To accept the explanation *in good health* is to throw away a good joke.

49. **a**: he.

GOBBO. Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir.

LAUNCELOT. But, I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

GOBBO. Of Launcelot, ain't please your mastership. 54

LAUNCELOT. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman — according to Fates and Destinies, and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three, and such branches of learning — is, indeed, deceas'd; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven. 59

GOBBO. Marry, God forbid; the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

LAUNCELOT [*Aside*] Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? — Do you know me, father? 63

GOBBO. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy — God rest his soul! — alive or dead?

LAUNCELOT. Do you not know me, father? 67

GOBBO. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

LAUNCELOT. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing. Truth will come to light;

52. **ergo**: therefore, insofar as it has any meaning at all in Launcelot's mouth.

56. **father**: Launcelot is not betraying his relationship to Gobbo, as it was the custom to address an old man as *father*. Edgar, son of the blind Gloucester, calls him *father*, in the same way, in *King Lear*, IV, vi, 73, and V, ii, 1.

57. **Sisters Three**: The three Fates, Clotho, who held the spindle, Lachesis, who wove man's fate upon it, and Atropos, who cut the thread of life.

62. **hovel-post**: a wooden stake supporting an old building.

64. **Alack**: alas.

72. **your blessing**: There is no stage direction at this point in early editions, but Alexander Dyce (1798–1869) a famous Shakespearean scholar, inserted *Kneels, with his back to Gobbo*, after the word *blessing*.

murder cannot be hid long,—a man's son may; but, in the end, truth will out. 74

GOBBO. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

LAUNCELOT. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing. I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be. 79

GOBBO. I cannot think you are my son.

LAUNCELOT. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man; and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother. 83

GOBBO. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou are mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipp'd might he be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail. 88

LAUNCELOT. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face, when I last saw him.

GOBBO. Lord, how art thou chang'd! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now? 94

Launcelot's turning his back to his father accounts for the old man's later mistake.

78-79. **your boy . . . be:** There is no need to try to make sense of this statement. Launcelot is simply *trying confusions* with his father.

85. **thou:** when Gobbo becomes convinced that he is talking to his son, he changes from *you* (used in speaking to one's superiors) to *thou* (used in speaking to one's equals or inferiors).

85-86. **Lord . . . he be:** The Lord be worshipped. Would that it were Launcelot.

86-87. **what a beard, etc:** Gobbo's error is explained by assuming the *stage business* suggested by Dyce, for line 72.

fill-horse: shaft-horse.

90. **of:** on.

LAUNCELOT. Well, well; but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famish'd in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. — O rare fortune! here comes the man: — to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer. 104

Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other followers

BASSANIO. You may do so; but let it be so hasted, that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters deliver'd; put the liveries to making; and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging. 108

[Exit a Servant]

LAUNCELOT. To him, father.

95. **Well, well:** fairly well, so so.

96. **set . . . rest:** I have made up my mind. The phrase is borrowed from a Spanish card game, *primero*, popular in Elizabethan London. To set up a rest was to stake all on the cards in one's hand.

97. **some ground:** The humor of Launcelot's phrase is appreciated when one remembers that there is not much ground to run upon in Venice.

very: true, real, used contemptuously.

98. **a halter:** Here, Launcelot unconsciously anticipates the noisy Gratiano, IV, i, 374.

99. **tell:** count.

finger . . . ribs: as is usual with Launcelot, he means just the opposite of what he says.

100. **give me:** the ethical dative. Launcelot means, Give your present for me to Bassanio.

103. **I am a Jew:** i.e. I am a rascal. In Shakespeare's time, *Jew* was used as a term of reproach, without reference to race or religion. Benedick uses the expression in *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, ii, 251. and so does Falstaff in the first part of *King Henry IV*, II, iv, 181. The phrase shows the anti-Semitic feeling of the day.

106. **farthest:** latest.

five of the clock: The Elizabethans had their supper earlier than we do.

107. **put to making:** order to be made.

GOBBO. God bless your worship!

BASSANIO. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me? 111

GOBBO. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, — 112

LAUNCELOT. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, — as my father shall specify, —

GOBBO. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve, — 116

LAUNCELOT. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, — as my father shall specify, —

GOBBO. His master and he — saving your worship's reverence — are scarce cater-cousins, — 120

LAUNCELOT. To be brief, the very truth, is, that the Jew having done me wrong doth cause me, — as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you, —

GOBBO. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship; and my suit is, — 125

LAUNCELOT. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet, poor man, my father.

BASSANIO. One speak for both. — What would you?

LAUNCELOT. Serve you, sir. 130

GOBBO. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

111. **Gramercy**: many thanks, from the French *grand merci*. Here, as often, the expression is used to denote surprise.

114. **man**: servant.

115. **infection**: Gobbo's error for *inclination, desire*.

120. **scarce cater-cousins**: hardly good friends.

123. **frutify**: certify.

124. **dish of doves**: A common dish in Italy. The touch shows that Shakespeare was familiar with Italian customs.

126. **impertinent**: Again Launcelot means the opposite of his statement, *pertinent*.

129. **One . . . you**: The attempts of father and son to speak at the same time have confused Bassanio and made him impatient.

131. **defect**: Gobbo means *point*.

BASSANIO. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:
 Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
 And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment
 To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
 The follower of so poor a gentleman. 135

LAUNCELOT. The old proverb is very well parted between
 my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God,
 sir, and he hath enough. 139

BASSANIO. Thou speak'st it well. — Go, father, with thy
 son. —

Take leave of thy old master, and inquire
 My lodging out. Give him a livery
 More guarded than his fellows': see it done. 143

LAUNCELOT. Father, in. — I cannot get a service, no; I
 have ne'er a tongue in my head. — Well, if any man in
 Italy have a fairer table! which doth offer to swear upon a
 book, I shall have good fortune! Go to; here's a simple
 line of life! here's a small trifle of wives: alas! fifteen

134. **preferr'd**: recommended, or promoted.
preferment: advancement, promotion. Bassanio is punning on
 two meanings of the word.

137. **The old proverb**: *The grace of God is wealth enough*, from
 the Scotch.

137. **parted**: divided.

139. he hath enough *wealth*.

143. **guarded**: embroidered. In Elizabethan English, the trim-
 mings (gold or silver lace, etc.) were called *guards*, as they protected the
 edge of the material.

144. **I cannot get a service**: Launcelot means that he *can* get a
position. Throughout this speech, Launcelot says the reverse of what
 he means. Perhaps Shylock has told him that he will not be able to
 secure another post, and Launcelot, overjoyed at being taken into
 Bassanio's employment, expresses his pleasure in this sarcastic manner.

145-147. **Well . . . fortune**: Any man in Italy who has (*or who*
can swear upon a book that he has) a hand with better lines than mine,
 is certainly very lucky.

146. **table**: in palmistry, the space between the fortune line and
 the natural line.

148. **line of life**: the line in the palm which curves around the
 thumb. Professional palmists call it the *Mount of Venus*.

wives is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man; and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed, — here are simple 'scapes! Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. — Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye. 154

[*Exeunt* LAUNCELOT and OLD GOBBO]

BASSANIO. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this: These things being bought and orderly bestow'd, Return in haste, for I do feast tonight

My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go. 158

LEONARDO. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO. Where is your master?

LEONARDO. Yonder, sir, he walks.
[*Exit*]

GRATIANO. Signior Bassanio, —

BASSANIO. Gratiano! 162

GRATIANO. I have a suit to you.

BASSANIO. You have obtain'd it.

GRATIANO. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont. 165

BASSANIO. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:

trifle of wives: according to palmistry long lines running from the ball of the thumb towards the line of life signified that the person would have as many wives as he had lines.

149. **a simple coming-in:** a scanty income.

152. **if Fortune be a woman:** Fortune was represented as a goddess.

153. **gear:** See Antonio's use of the word, in I, i, 110.

156. **bestow'd:** put away.

158. **best-esteem'd:** See the adjective used by Morocco, in II, i, 10.

164. **deny:** refuse.

Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice, —
 Parts that become thee happily enough,
 And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
 But where thou art not known, why, there they show 170
 Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
 To allay with some cold drops of modesty
 Thy skipping spirit; lest, through thy wild behaviour,
 I be misconstru'd in the place I go to,
 And lose my hopes.

GRATIANO. Signior Bassanio, hear me: 175
 If I do not put on a sober habit,
 Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
 Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely;
 Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
 Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say 'amen'; 180
 Use all the observance of civility,
 Like one well studied in a sad ostent
 To please his grandam, never trust me more.

BASSANIO. Well, we shall see your bearing. 184

168. **Parts:** qualities. See what Portia says about the Neapolitan prince, in I, ii, 37-9.

171. **liberal:** free, coarse.

pain: care. We should say pains.

172. **allay:** moderate.

173. **skipping:** wild, lacking in dignity, frolicsome.

174. **misconstru'd:** misunderstood.

176. **habit:** manner.

177. **respect:** modesty, consideration (for others).

178. **wear:** carry.

demurely: seriously.

179. **is saying:** is being said.

180. **Thus with my hat:** In Shakespeare's day, people of station wore their hats at meals. During grace they would take them off and hold them before their eyes.

181. **Use . . . civility:** observe the requirements of good manners.

182. **sad ostent:** serious deportment.

183. **grandam:** grandmother. Both Malvolio and Feste use the word, in *Twelfth Night*, IV, ii, 53, and 61.

184. **bearing:** conduct.

GRATIANO. Nay, but I bar to-night : you shall not gage me
By what we do to-night.

BASSANIO. No, that were pity :
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well :
I have some business. 190

GRATIANO. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest :
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *The same. A room in SHYLOCK'S house*

Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT

JESSICA. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so :
Our house is hell ; and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well ; there is a ducat for thee :
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see 5
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest :
Give him this letter ; do it secretly ;
And so farewell : I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee. 9

LAUNCELOT. Adieu ! tears exhibit my tongue. Most
beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew ! if a Christian do not

185. **gage**: judge.

189. **purpose**: intend

3. **some taste**: some small portion.

5. **soon**: early. The phrase *soon at supper* occurs frequently in Shakespeare. In *The Comedy of Errors*, Angelo, a Goldsmith, tells Antipholus of Syracuse "*soon at supper-time* I'll visit you," III, ii, 177, and in *King Richard III*, Richard, anxious to learn the details of the murder of the princes, tells Tyrrel "*Come to me, soon, at after-supper,*" IV, iii, 31.

10. **exhibit**: Launcelot means prohibit, or prevent.

11. **pagan**: i.e. not a Christian. The description fits Jessica in more ways than one.



LAUNCELOT RECEIVING JESSICA'S LETTER TO LORENZO
JESSICA. Give him this letter; do it secretly.

play the knave and get thee, I am much deceiv'd. But,
 adieu: these foolish drops do something drown my manly
 spirit: adieu. 14

JESSICA. Farewell, good Launcelot. — [*Exit LAUNCELOT*]
 Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
 To be asham'd to be my father's child!
 But though I am a daughter to his blood,
 I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
 If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife, 20
 Become a Christian, and thy loving wife! [*Exit*]

SCENE IV. *The same. A street*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO

LORENZO. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
 Disguise us at my lodging, and return
 All in an hour.

GRATIANO. We have not made good preparation.

SALARINO. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers. 5

SALARINO. 'T is vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
 And better in my mind not undertook.

13. **something**: somewhat.

16. **heinous**: terrible.

19. **manners**: way of living. In *As You Like It*, Le Beau, a courtier, in reply to Orlando's "Which of the two [Rosalind and Celia] was daughter of the Duke?" answers "Neither his daughter, if we judge by *manners*," I, ii, 257.

20. **strife**: trouble (of having to do things secretly). Some critics believe that the *strife* is between her duty to Shylock and her love for Lorenzo, but nowhere else in the play does Jessica show the slightest consideration for her father.

1. **in**: during.

2. **Disguise us**: mask ourselves.

5. **spoke us**: bespoken for ourselves. *Us* is the ethical dative.

6. **vile**: ordinary.

quaintly order'd: artistically arranged.

7. **in**: to.

LORENZO. 'T is now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us. —

Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

LAUNCELOT. And it shall please you to break up this, it
shall seem to signify. 11

LORENZO. I know the hand: in faith, 't is a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

GRATIANO. Love-news, in faith.

LAUNCELOT. By your leave, sir. 15

LORENZO. Whither goest thou?

LAUNCELOT. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to
sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

LORENZO. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately:
Go. — Gentlemen, *[Exit LAUNCELOT]*
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

SALARINO. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

SALANIO. And so will I.

LORENZO. Meet me and Gratiano 25
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

SALARINO. 'T is good we do so.

[Exeunt SALARINO and SALANIO]

9. **To furnish:** (in which) to dress.

10. **And: if.**
break up: open.

12, 14. **hand . . . hand:** A quibble on *handwriting* and *hand*.

15. **By your leave:** Launcelot uses this apologetic expression as he
turns to go. Bassanio uses the phrase for a different purpose in
III, ii, 139.

22. **masque:** masquerade.

23. **of:** with. The reference is to Jessica. See line 39.

26. **some:** an.

GRATIANO. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

LORENZO. I must needs tell thee all: She hath directed
 How I shall take her from her father's house; 30
 What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;
 What page's suit she hath in readiness.
 If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
 It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;
 And never dare misfortune cross her foot, 35
 Unless she do it under this excuse,
 That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
 Come, go with me: peruse this as thou goest.
 Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [Exeunt]

SCENE V. *The same. Before SHYLOCK'S house*

Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT

SHYLOCK. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy
 judge,
 The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:—
 What, Jessica!—thou shalt not gormandize,
 As thou has done with me,—what, Jessica!—
 And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out.— 5
 Why, Jessica, I say!

LAUNCELOT. Why, Jessica!

SHYLOCK. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

29–32. Lorenzo's explanation is for the audience.

33. **come to heaven**: See III, v, 64.

35. **never dare**: (may) misfortune never dare; *dare* is subjunctive.

36. **she**: misfortune.

37. **she**: Jessica.

faithless: unbelieving. This, of course, is only the viewpoint of Lorenzo and his friends. As a Hebrew, Shylock is a strict believer.

3. **gormandize**: eat greedily.

LAUNCELOT. "Your worship was wont to tell me I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA

JESSICA. Call you? what is your will? 10

SHYLOCK. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. — But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian, — Jessica, my girl, 15
Look to my house. — I am right loth to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

LAUNCELOT. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach. 20

SHYLOCK. So do I his.

LAUNCELOT. And they have conspir'd together, — I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-

11. **bid forth:** invited out. See line 36.

17. **rest:** peace of mind.

18. It was believed that to dream of money meant that one would lose it.

to-night: *last night*, as often in Shakespeare. The use of *to-night* when last night is meant is especially appropriate for Shylock, as Hebrews count the day from sunset to sunset. Cæsar, in telling Decius Brutus why he will not come to the senate, says of his wife, Calpurnia, "She dream'd *to-night* she saw my statue," II, ii, 76, and Cinna, the poet, says "I dreamt *to-night* that I did feast with Cæsar," *Julius Cæsar*, III, iii, 1.

20. **expect:** await.

reproach: Launcelot means *approach*. Shylock humorously pretends to misunderstand him.

22. **conspir'd together** (to arrange a masquerade). To Jessica, and to the audience, the words have a meaning unknown to Launcelot.

24. **a-bleeding:** regarded, by the supersitious, as a sign of future evil.

Black-Monday: Easter Monday. On April 14, 1360, when Edward III was attacking Paris, the day was so cold that many of his soldiers died on horseback. The incident is recorded in the *Chronicle* of John Stow (1525-1605), tailor and antiquarian. Schoolboys have

Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year in the afternoon. 26

SHYLOCK. What, are there masques? — Hear you me,
Jessica:

Lock up my doors; and, when you hear the drum,
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then, 30
Nor thrust your head into the public street,
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces;
But stop my house's ears, — I mean my casements:
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. — By Jacob's staff, I swear 35
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:
But I will go. — Go you before me, sirrah;
Say I will come.

LAUNCELOT. I will go before, sir. — Mistress, look out at window for all this;

been known to apply the term to a less serious occasion: the first day of school.

26. **Ash-Wednesday**: the first day of Lent, so called from the custom, among Roman Catholics, of sprinkling ashes on the heads of repentant sinners.

29. **wry-neck'd fife**: As with *drum*, in the line above, this may mean either the instrument or the player. In the *Aphorisms* of Barnaby Rich (1540-1620), one of whose stories was used by Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*, we read: "A fife is a wry-neckt musician, for he always looks away from his instrument." The reference in the play has provoked much (unnecessary) discussion, but the meaning is clear, which-ever explanation be accepted.

30. **you**: used with emphasis. Shylock expects Jessica to be different from others.

casements: windows.

32. **varnish'd**: painted.

34. **foppery**: folly, nonsense.

35. **Jacob's staff**: pilgrim's staff. St. James (*Jacobus*) the patron saint of pilgrims, is represented with a staff in his hand. See *Genesis*, XXXII, 10, and *Hebrews*, XI, 21.

37. **sirrah**: Used impatiently, not, as in I, ii, 123, affectionately.

There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [Exit]

SHYLOCK. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

JESSICA. His words were, 'Farewell, mistress'; nothing else.

SHYLOCK. The patch is kind enough; but a huge feeder,
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day 46

More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me;

Therefore I part with him; and part with him

To one that I would have him help to waste

His borrow'd purse. — Well, Jessica, go in: 50

Perhaps I will return immediately:

Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:

Fast bind, fast find, —

A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [Exit]

JESSICA. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost, 55
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [Exit]

41. **Christian:** Lorenzo.

42. **worth a Jewess' eye:** worth while for a Jewess to look at. The phrase, which means *worth a great deal*, is a relic of the Middle Ages, when Jews, captured by a king or a nobleman, were compelled to pay a large amount of money in order to escape being tortured. Our old friend, Isaac of York, will be remembered in this connection by lovers of *Ivanhoe*.

43. **Hagar's offspring:** the Gentiles. To Shylock, the offspring of Abraham, by his Gentile servant, Hagar, was inferior to the Jews.

45. **patch:** clown, fellow. The term is derived from the patch-like garment worn by court jesters. Later, the application became more general in meaning fool or simpleton. The term is used by Puck, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, III, ii, 9, and in *Macbeth*, V, iii, 15.

46. **Snail-slow:** slow as a snail.

profit: labor from which *profit* arises.

47. **wild-cat:** which, being nocturnal by nature, sleeps during the day.

drones: idlers.

50. borrow'd *from Antonio*.

54. **stale:** out-of-date.

55. **crost:** thwarted.

SCENE VI. *The same**Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued*

GRATIANO. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desir'd us to make stand.

SALARINO. His hour is almost past.

GRATIANO. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

SALARINO. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly 5
To seal love's bonds new-made than they are wont,
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

GRATIANO. That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again 10
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
How like a youngster or a prodigal
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay, 15
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs, and ragged sails,

1. **pent-house**: a porch or shed with a projecting roof.

2. **make stand**: wait for him.

3. **out-dwells**: stays beyond.

5. **Venus' pigeons**: In mythology Venus rides with her son, Cupid, in a chariot drawn by doves. See *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, I, i, 171, and *The Tempest*, IV, i, 94.

7. **obliged faith unforfeited**: a solemn pledge unbroken.

8. **That ever holds**: That (what you have just said) is always true.

10. **untread**: retrace.

11. **measures**: paces.

12. **are**: exist.

14. **youngster**: youngster.

15. **scarfed**: decorated with flags.

16. **strumpet**: wanton.

18. **over-weather'd ribs**: ribs beaten by the wind.

Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind! 19

SALARINO. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO

LORENZO. Sweet friends, your patience for my long
abode;

Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:

When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,

I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;

Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within? 25

Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes

JESSICA. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

LORENZO. Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA. Lorenzo, certain; and my love, indeed;
For who love I so much? And now who knows 30
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

LORENZO. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that
thou art.

JESSICA. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 't is night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange: 35
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see

21. **patience:** pardon, indulgence.

abode: delay.

25. **father-in-law.**

27. **Albeit:** although.

30. **For who:** for whom.

31. **yours:** i.e. the one you love.

32. that thou art *the one I love*.

35. *exchange of clothes.*

36. **love is blind:** "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the
mind;

And therefore is winged Cupid painted *blind*."
says Helena, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I, i, 234-5.

The pretty follies that themselves commit;
 For, if they could, Cupid himself would blush
 To see me thus transformed to a boy.

LORENZO. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer. 40

JESSICA. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
 They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
 Why, 't is an office of discovery, love;
 And I should be obscur'd.

LORENZO. So are you, sweet,
 Even in the lovely garnish of a boy. 45

But come at once;
 For the close night doth play the runaway,
 And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
 With some more ducats, and be with you straight. 50

[Exit above]

GRATIANO. Now, by my hood, a Gentile, and no Jew.

42. **too too**: the repetition is for the purpose of emphasis, and is often found in Shakespeare. "O! that this *too too* solid flesh would melt," says Hamlet, I, ii, 129. Proteus, when he finds that he is falling in love with Sylvia, beloved by his friend, Valentine, says "O! but I love his lady *too too* much," *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, iv, 206. Don Adriano De Armado, the Spaniard, says Holofernes is "*too too* vain," *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 525, and Ford, the jealous husband, says of his wife, "her defences are *too too* strongly embattled against me," *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, II, ii, 261.

light: Jessica is punning on the two meanings of the word, *bright*, and *frivolous or wanton*. Portia repeats the pun in Act V, line 129.

43. **office of discovery**: it is the duty of a torch-bearer to expose or discover.

44. **should be obscur'd**: ought to be concealed.

So are you (obscur'd).

45. **garnish**: garment.

47. **close**: secret.

play the runaway: Lorenzo means that time is flying.

48. **stay'd for**: awaited.

49. **gild**: furnish (with *gold* ducats).

51. **by my hood**: Gratiano, in his masquerade dress, has a hood over his head.

a Gentile, and no Jew: A pun on the double meaning of Gentile,

LORENZO. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
 For she is wise, if I can judge of her;
 And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;
 And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself; 55
 And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
 Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, below

What, art thou come? — On, gentlemen; away!
 Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[Exit, with JESSICA and SALARINO]

Enter ANTONIO

ANTONIO. Who's there? 60

GRATIANO. Signior Antonio!

ANTONIO. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
 'T is nine o'clock; our friends all stay for you.
 No masque to-night: the wind is come about;
 Bassanio presently will go aboard: 65
 I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

GRATIANO. I am glad on 't: I desire no more delight
 That to be under sail and gone to-night. *[Exeunt]*

(1) a pagan [see Launcelot's description, II, iii, 11], and (2) one well-born. As the actions of Jessica, which give rise to Gratiano's pun, are hardly worthy of praise, it is possible that Shakespeare is here making a sly hit at *Christian* standards of conduct.

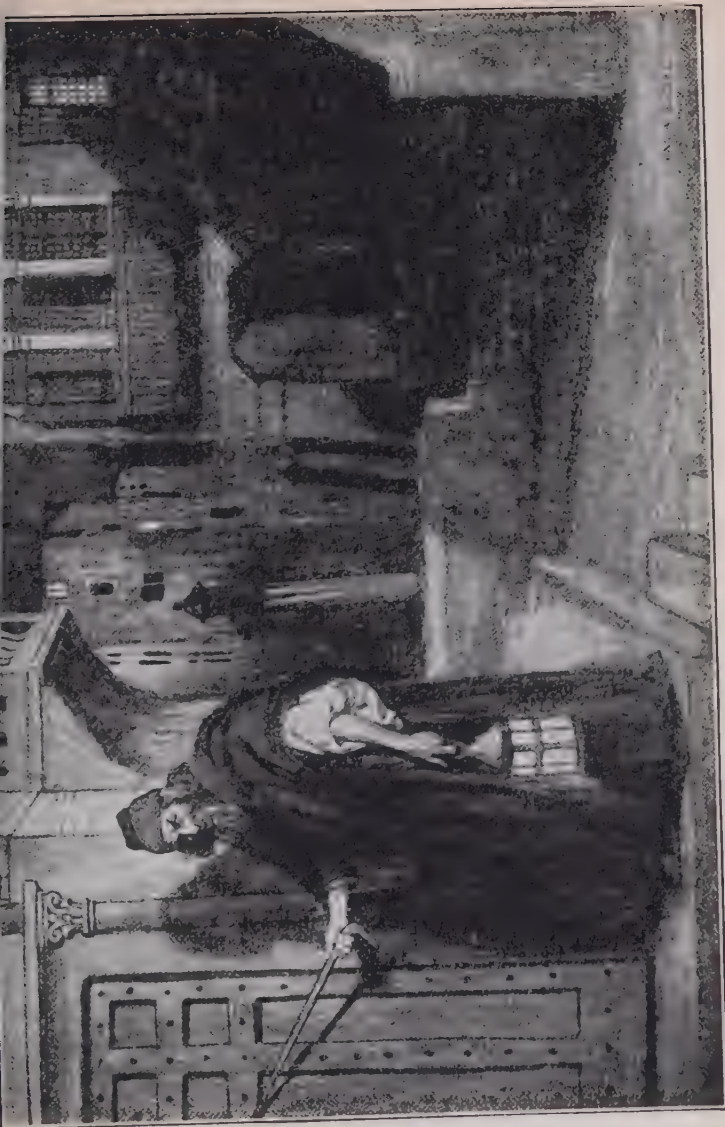
52. **Beshrew**: a mild oath, meaning *curse me*.
but: if not.

53-56. Here we see Jessica through Christian eyes. From the standpoint of her own people, Jessica does not possess these qualities. Lorenzo and his associates in theft are incapable of appreciating or understanding the Jewish viewpoint.

57. **placed**: enshrined as a saint.
constant in love.

64. **is come about**: has changed favorably.

65. **presently**: immediately. See IV, i, 382, 399, and 450.



THE HOUSE AT THE END OF THE STREET
JESSICA'S EIGHT

SCENE VII. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house*
Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA, with the PRINCE OF
MOROCCO, and their trains

PORTIA. Go draw aside the curtains, and discover
 The several caskets to this noble prince. —
 Now make your choice.

MOROCCO. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire!' 5
 The second, silver, which this promise carries,
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves!'
 This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
 How shall I know if I do choose the right? 10

PORTIA. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
 If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

MOROCCO. Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;
 I will survey the inscriptions back again.
 What says this leaden casket? 15

'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
 Must give, — for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
 This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
 Do it in hope of fair advantages:

1. **the curtains:** see Introduction, page xv.
discover: disclose, reveal.

4. **who:** which. In Shakespeare's time, *who* and *which* were used interchangeably.

6. **carries:** bears.

8. **all as blunt:** quite as plain (as the lead).

10. **the right (one).**

11. **The (right) one.**

12. **withal:** with it.

14. **back again:** Morocco means that he will examine the inscriptions in reverse order, lead, silver, gold.

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross; 20
 I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
 What says the silver with her virgin hue?
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
 As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
 And weigh thy value with an even hand: 25
 If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
 Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
 May not extend so far as to the lady:
 And yet to be afeard of my deserving
 Were but a weak disabling of myself. 30
 As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
 I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
 In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
 But more than these, in love I do deserve.
 What if I stray'd no further, but chose here? 35
 Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold:
 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
 Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her:
 From the four corners of the earth they come,
 To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint: 40

20. **golden:** noble.

dross: worthless material.

21. **nor . . . nor:** neither . . . nor.

ought: anything.

22. **virgin:** cold, chaste.

25. **even:** fair, impartial.

26. **rated by:** taken at your own.

27. **enough:** a great deal.

29. **afeard:** afraid. Shakespeare uses both forms.

30. **disabling:** belittlement.

36. **engrav'd.**

40. **shrine:** image (of a saint).

mortal breathing: breathing like a mortal.

The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
 Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
 For princes to come view fair Portia:
 The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
 Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar 45
 To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
 One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
 Is't like that lead contains her? 'T were damnation
 To think so base a thought: it were too gross 50
 To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
 Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,
 Being ten times undervalu'd to tried gold?
 O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
 Was set in worse than gold. They have in England 55
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel

41. **Hyrcanian deserts:** on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. Hyrcania was noted for its tigers. Macbeth, terror-stricken at sight of the Ghost, cries out, "What man dare, I dare: Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear, The arm'd rhinoceros, or the *Hyrcan* tiger," III, iv, 99-101. Richard Plantagenet, (third) Duke of York, denounces Queen Margaret as "more inhuman, more inexorable, O, ten times more than tigers of *Hyrcania*," third part of *King Henry VI*, I, iv, 154-5. Hamlet, in his directions to the Players, asks the First Player to recite the passage about the "*Hyrcanian* beast," II, ii, 481.

42. **throughfares:** thoroughfares.

44-47. Morocco means that Portia's suitors are not held back by the ocean which they cross as if it were a brook.

49. **likely.**

50. **it:** the lead.

gross: coarse, common.

51. **To . . . cerecloth:** to enclose her shroud. A *cerecloth* was a waxed cloth used in embalming.

obscure: dark.

53. **(silver) Being ten times undervalu'd:** In Shakespeare's day, this was the ratio of silver to gold.

tried: refined.

56. **angel:** An old English coin worth about ten shillings (\$2.50). One side represents the Archangel Michael piercing the dragon which he treads under his foot; the other side has a ship with a cross as a mast. Falstaff, planning to make love to Ford's wife, says of Ford, "he hath a legion of angels," *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I, iii, 59.

Stamped in gold, but that 's insculp'd upon;

But here an angel in a golden bed

Lies all within.— Deliver me the key:

Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may! 60

PORTIA. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,

Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the casket*]

MOROCCO. O hell! what have we here?

A carrion Death, within whose empty eye

There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads*] All that glisters is not gold; 65

Often have you heard that told:

Many a man his life hath sold

But my outside to behold:

Gilded timber do worms infold.

Had you been as wise as bold, 70

Young in limbs, in judgment old,

Your answer had not been inscroll'd:

Fare you well; your suit is cold.

Cold, indeed, and labour lost;

Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!

57. **insculp'd upon**: engraved on (the surface). *That* refers to the "figure of the angel." *Upon* is placed at the end of the line for emphasis, and is to be contrasted with *within* (59).

58. **angel in a golden bed**: Portia's picture in a golden casket. Here *angel* refers to Portia's picture, not to the coin.

59. **key**: pronounced *kay* so as to rhyme with *may* of the next line.

63. **carrion death**: empty skull.

65. **glisters**: *glitters*. Thomas Gray (1716-1771) wrote an *Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat* that did not know that

"Not all, that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
Not all that glisters, gold."

68. **my outside**: the gold.

69. **timber**: tombs; *timber* was regarded as a plural noun.

70-72. Had you been as wise as you are brave, your answer would not have been written on *this* scroll.

73. **cold**: dead.

75. **Then . . . frost**: farewell to the warmth (of victory), and welcome to the coldness (of defeat).

Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

[*Exit, with his train. Flourish of cornets*]

PORTIA. A gentle riddance. — Draw the curtains; go:
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [Exeunt]

SCENE VIII. *Venice. A street*

Enter SALARINO and SALANIO

SALARINO. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in the ship I'm sure Lorenzo is not.

SALANIO. The villain Jew with outcries rais'd the Duke;
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship. 5

SALARINO. He came too late, the ship was under sail;
But there the Duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the Duke 10
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

SALANIO. I never heard a passion so confus'd,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! Oh my ducats! O my daughter! 15

77. *depart.*

78. *riddance*: leave taking.

Draw the curtains: See Introduction, page xv.

79. *complexion*: Portia is playing with the two meanings of the word, (1) color, (2) character, disposition.

4. *the villain Jew*: the phrase illustrates the Venetian attitude towards Jews. See line 14.

rais'd: awoke.

9. *amorous*: loving.

12. *passion*: an emotional outburst expressing itself in cries.

15-22. For a similar passage, see the outburst of Barabas in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, II, i.

Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
 Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
 A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
 Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
 And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones, 20
 Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl!
 She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!'

SALARINO. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
 Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

SALANIO. Let good Antonio look he keep his day, 25
 Or he shall pay for this.

SALARINO. Marry, well remember'd.
 I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
 Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
 The French and English, there miscarried
 A vessel of our country richly fraught: 30
 I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
 And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

SALANIO. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
 yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

SALARINO. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth. 35
 I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
 Bassanio told him he would make some speed
 Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so;
 Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,

20. **two stones:** See III, i, 73, and 106.

26. **well remember'd:** that reminds me.

27. **reason'd:** talked.

28. **narrow seas:** the English Channel. See III, i, 3-4.

29. **miscarried:** sank.

30. **fraught:** laden.

32. **were:** might not be.

33. **You were best:** (it) were best for you; the *you* is dative.

39. **Slubber not:** do not endanger your business by hurrying over it.

But stay the very riping of the time; 40
 And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
 Let it not enter in your mind of love:
 Be merry; and employ your chiefest thoughts
 To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
 As shall conveniently become you there: ' 45
 And even there, his eye being big with tears,
 Turning his face, he put his hand behind him.
 And with affection wondrous sensible
 He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

SALANIO. I think he only loves the world for him. 50
 I pray thee, let us go and find him out,
 And quicken his embraced heaviness
 With some delight or other.

SALARINO. Do we so. [Exeunt]

SCENE IX. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house*

Enter NERISSA, with a Servitor

NERISSA. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain
 straight:
 The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
 And comes to his election presently.

40. Antonio, ignorant of the terms by which Portia may be wooed, is under the impression that she is at liberty to choose her own husband. Bassanio has not told him otherwise. Therefore, Antonio counsels him to stay as long as may be necessary.

42. **mind of love**: loving mind.

44. **ostents**: signs, evidences.

45. **conveniently**: properly, fitly.

46. **there**: at that point.

47. Turning his face *away* (to hide his emotion).

48. **affection wondrous sensible**: deeply sensitive feeling.

52. **quicken his embraced heaviness**: cheer the sadness which embraces. See I, i, 6.

1. **Draw the curtain**: See Introduction, page xv, and II, vii, 1.

3. **election**: choice.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON,
PORTIA, and their trains*

PORTIA. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd, 5
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

ARRAGON. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three
things:

First, never to unfold to any one 10
Which casket 't was I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage;
Lastly, if I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone. 15

PORTIA. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

ARRAGON. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! — Gold, silver, and base lead.
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.' 20
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
What many men desire. That 'many' may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show, 25
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;

5. **I:** i.e. my portrait.

14. **in fortune of my choice:** to make a successful choice.

18. **address'd me:** prepared myself (to meet the *injunction*).
(May) Fortune now (be kind, etc).

25. **By:** for.

fool: foolish. See note on *fool gudgeon*, I, i, 102.

26. **fond:** foolish. See I, ii, 109.

Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.

I will not choose what many men desire, 30
Because I will not jump with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.

Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.' 35

And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honorable

Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.

O, that estates, degrees, and offices 40

Were not deriv'd corruptly! and that clear honour

Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!

How many then should cover that stand bare!

27. **martlet**: the swift (or swiftlet), not, as usually explained, the house-martin or swallow. The bird derives its name from the fact that it is very *swift*-flying. Honest Banquo refers to "This guest of summer, The temple-haunting *martlet*," *Macbeth*, I, vi, 4.

28. **in the weather**: exposed to.

29. **Even . . . casualty**: in the way of (exposed to) attack.

31. **jump**: act, agree. In the *first* part of *King Henry IV*, Falstaff says to Prince Henry, "it *jumps with* my humor," I, ii, 69, and in *Twelfth Night*, Viola tells her brother, Sebastian, "Do not embrace me till each circumstance Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and *jump* That I am Viola," V, i, 253-5.

common spirits: ordinary men

32. **barbarous**: rough, coarse.

34. **title**: inscription.

36. **go about**: try.

37. **cozen**: cheat.

40. **estates**: positions of ranks.

degrees: titles.

41. **deriv'd corruptly**: obtained by dishonest means.

clear: unstained, without any taint of suspicion.

42. **purchas'd**: secured. Metellus Cimber, in arguing that Cicero should be taken into the conspiracy, says "his silver hairs Will *purchase* us a good opinion," *Julius Caesar*, II, i, 144-5.

43. **How . . . bare**: How many then would put their hats on (as masters) who now stand bare-headed (as servants).

How many be commanded that command!

How much low peasantry would then be glean'd 45

From the true seed of honour! and how much honour

Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,

To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

I will assume desert—give me a key for this, 50

And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket*]

PORTIA. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

ARRAGON. What 's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,

Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.

How much unlike art thou to Portia! 55

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?

Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

PORTIA. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices, 60
And of opposed natures.

ARRAGON.

What is here?

45-47. This passage has been well-paraphrased by Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) as: "How much meanness would be found among the great, and how much greatness among the mean."

46. **seed**: offspring.

48. **new-varnish'd**: See Shylock's use of the word, II, v, 32.

50. **assume desert**: claim (that which is my) desert.

54. **schedule**: scroll.

60-1. Portia here shows some of the legal ability which she displays in Act IV. In the trial scene, however, her knowledge is not her own. Here she tells Arragon that a man cannot be a fair judge of his own offence. Having, as a suitor, accepted the terms of the choosing, he has no right to express dissatisfaction with his *prize*.

61. **opposed**: opposite.

[*Reads*] The fire seven times tried this:
 Seven times tried that judgment is,
 That did never choose amiss.
 Some there be that shadows kiss; 65
 Such have but a shadow's bliss:
 There be fools alive, I wis,
 Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
 Take what wife you will to bed,
 I will ever be your head: 70

So be gone: you are sped.
 Still more fool I shall appear
 By the time I linger here:
 With one fool's head I came to woo,
 But I go away with two. 75
 Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
 Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt* ARRAGON and train]

PORTIA. Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.
 O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
 They have the wisdom by their wit to lose. 80

62. **this**: the casket.

65. **shadows kiss**: embrace phantoms. Arragon's *shadow* was his vanity.

67. **I wis**: certainly, from the Old English *ywis*. Through misunderstanding, the *y* was thought to be the first person *I*. In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge has made the same error. (Part 3, line 10).

68. **silver'd o'er**: the portrait of the *blinking idiot* was in the silver casket.

70. **I**: the *fool's head* of line 58.

I . . . head: Single or married, you will always have a fool's head.

71. **sped**: through, i.e. You have had your chance.

72-73. **Still . . . here**: the longer *I* stay, the more fool, etc.

76. Sweet *Portia*.

77. **wroth**: disappointment.

79. **deliberate**: because they thought that the successful choice depended on thinking (deliberation) instead of on love.

80. **They . . . lose**: They choose the wrong casket because they are *too* wise.

NERISSA. The ancient saying is no heresy, —
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

PORTIA. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant

SERVANT. Where is my lady?

PORTIA. Here: what would my lord?

SERVANT. Madam, there is alighted at your gate 85
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord,
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets;
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen 90
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

PORTIA. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard 95
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him. —

81. **heresy**: false belief.

83. draw the curtain *to*. Portia directs Nerissa to cover the caskets (for the next suitor) by drawing the curtain *to*. At the opening of this scene, Portia has told Nerissa to draw the curtain *back* or *aside*, so that the caskets may be revealed to Arragon.

84. **my lord**: Portia, in very good spirits at Arragon's choice, addresses the messenger with a title corresponding to his *my lady*.

86. **A young Venetian**: i.e. Gratiano.

87. **signify**: announce.

88. **sensible regrets**: substantial greetings, evident to the senses, not mere compliments and polite speeches, but *Gifts of rich value*.

89. **To wit**: namely.

91. **likely** (to please, by his handsome appearance).

93. **costly**: magnificent.

94. **fore-spurrer**: one that rides before.

97. **high-day wit**: holiday wit; wit, appropriate, because of its elegant phrases, for a holiday occasion.

Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

NERISSA. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be! 100

[*Exeunt*]

99. **post:** messenger.

100. **lord Love:** Cupid, the god of Love. Nerissa means *O Cupid*,
may it be Bassanio!

SALANIO. Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

SHYLOCK. I say my daughter is my flesh and blood. 32

SALARINO. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

SHYLOCK. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was us'd to come so smug upon the mart. Let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond. 43

SALARINO. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what 's that good for? 45

SHYLOCK. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd me, and hinder'd me half a million; laugh'd at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorn'd my nation, thwarted my bargains, cool'd my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the

35. **Rhenish**: See I, ii, 87.

37. **match**: bargain.

39. **smug**: satisfied with himself; smartly dressed.

40. **mart**: market.

47. **it will feed my revenge**: See I, iii, 43.

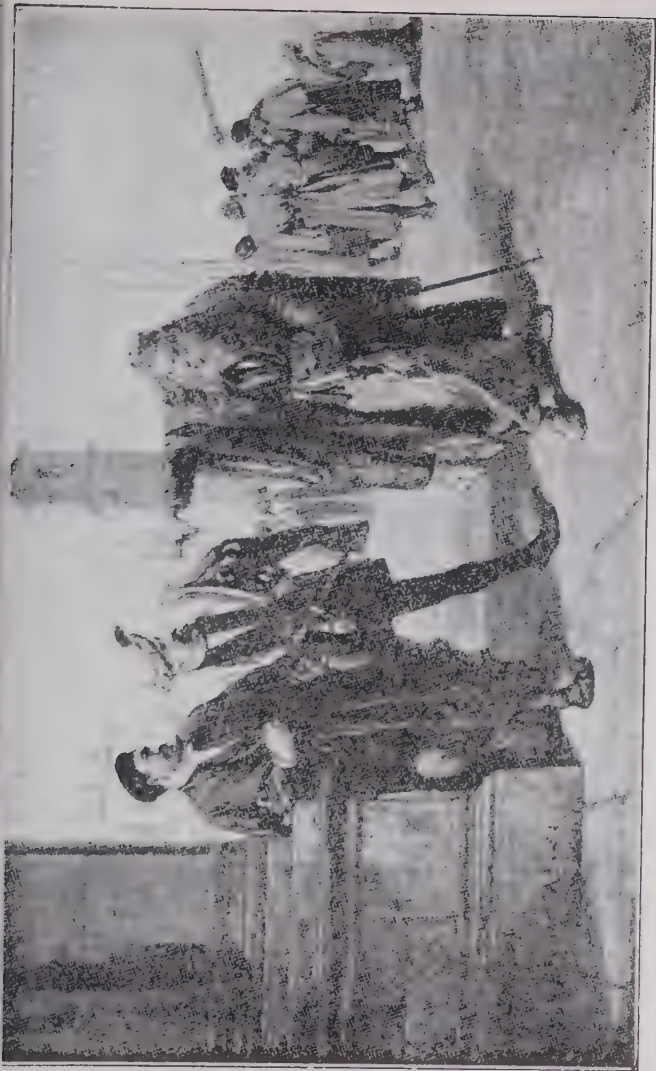
hinder'd: prevented me (from making).

50. **heated**: stirred up against me.

52. **dimensions**: parts of the body.

senses: the five physical senses (by means of which we derive our knowledge of the world about us), sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

affections, passions: feelings (joy, sorrow, etc.) emotions (love, hate, etc.). For *affections*, see Lorenzo's speech, in V, 87.



SALANIO AND SALARINO JEERING AT SHYLOCK

same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, heal'd by the same means, warm'd and cool'd by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. 63

Enter a Servant

SERVANT. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house, and desires to speak with you both. 65

SALARINO. We have been up and down to seek him.

SALANIO. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be match'd, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[Exeunt SALANIO, SALARINO, and Servant]

Enter TUBAL

SHYLOCK. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter? 70

55. **winter and summer:** i.e. summer and winter. The inversion, which is called chiasmus, is found in I, iii, 21-2.

60. **humility:** forbearance.

61. **sufferance:** the same as *humility*, in the line above. See I, iii, 102.

63. **it shall go hard:** See Jessica's statement, in III, ii, 285.

better: improve upon: Compare the modern slang phrase, "go you one better."

66. **up and down** *the Rialto*.

67. **the Hebrew** tribe.

68. **match'd:** found to equal them, i.e. Shylock and Tubal.

TUBAL. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her. 72

SHYLOCK. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? — Why, so: — and I know not what 's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding. 85

TUBAL. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa, —

SHYLOCK. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck? 88

TUBAL. hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

73. **a diamond**: one of the *two stones* mentioned in Salanio's account of Shylock's passion, II, viii, 20. The other is the turquoise which Shylock *would not have given for a wilderness of monkeys* (line 107).

74. **Frankfort**: Frankfort-on-the-Main, in Germany, famous for its semi-annual fairs, held in March and September.

75. **The curse**: pronounced on the Jews for rejecting Christ.

76. (*gone*) in that (*one diamond*).

77-79. **I would . . . coffin**: This passage is strong reason for believing that Shakespeare had little personal knowledge, if any, of Jews. Among them, family ties are regarded as most sacred, and it is difficult to believe that a Jew would utter such sentiments as Shakespeare has put in Shylock's mouth.

78. **hears'd**: in a hearse, i.e. in her coffin.

80. **Why, so**: Why, well and good. See I, iii, 161.

81. **loss upon loss**: one loss after another.

SHYLOCK. I thank God, I thank God! — Is it true, is it true?

TUBAL. I spoke with some of the sailors that escap'd the wreck. 92

SHYLOCK. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! — here in Genoa.

TUBAL. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats. 96

SHYLOCK. Thou stick'st a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

TUBAL. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

SHYLOCK. I am very glad of it: I 'll plague him; I 'll torture him: I am glad of it. 102

TUBAL. One of them show'd me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey. 104

SHYLOCK. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

TUBAL. But Antonio is certainly undone. 108

SHYLOCK. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, Tubal,

98. **a sitting:** i.e. *in one night*.

99. **divers:** several.

100. **cannot . . . break:** must become bankrupt.

108. **undone:** financially ruined.

110. **fee:** pay (in advance) for.

officer: jailer, sheriff's officer, *not* a lawyer.

bespeak . . . before: engage him beforehand.

and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house*

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and Attendants

PORTIA. I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two
 Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
 I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
 There 's something tells me — but it is not love —
 I would not lose you; and you know yourself, 5
 Hate counsels not in such a quality.
 But, lest you should not understand me well,—
 And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—
 I would detain you here some month or two
 Before you venture for me. I could teach you 10
 How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;
 So will I never be: so may you miss me;
 But, if you do, you 'll make me wish a sin,
 That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,

2. *in choosing*: if you choose.

4. *but it is not love*: Portia does not wish to openly declare her love to Bassanio before he has made his *hazard*.

6. *Hate . . . quality*: The advice I have given you is not that of hate.

8. *And yet*: i.e. even if you should tarry.

hath . . . thought: has thoughts which she may not express in words.

9. *some month or two*: Another indication of Portia's love; in line 1, she would have Bassanio *pause a day or two*.

10. *I could teach you*: As a result of the unsuccessful attempts of Morocco and Arragon, Portia *could* tell Bassanio which is the right casket.

11. *I am forsworn*: I should be guilty of violating my oath.

12. *so . . . so*: that (i.e. *forsworn*) . . . under these circumstances.

14. *Beshrew*: see II, vi, 52.

They have o'erlook'd me, and divided me; 15
 One half of me is yours, the other half yours.—
 Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
 And so all yours! O, these naughty times
 Puts bars between the owners and their rights!
 And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so, 20
 Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
 I speak too long; but 't is to peize the time,
 To eke it, and to draw it out in length,
 To stay you from election.

BASSANIO. Let me choose;
 For, as I am, I live upon the rack. 25

PORTIA. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
 What treason there is mingled with your love.

BASSANIO. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
 Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:
 There may as well be amity and life 30
 'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

15. **o'erlook'd**: bewitched, with a reference to the "evil eye." Pistol, one of Falstaff's comrades, cries out "Vile worm, thou wast o'erlooked even in thy birth," *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, V, v, 87.

divided me: into two halves; see next line.

18. **naughty**: evil, wicked. In Shakespeare's time, the word had a much stronger suggestion than now. See III, iii, 9, and V, 91.

20. **though yours, not yours**: yours in love, but not legally yours. **Prove it so**: (should it) turn out that I am not to be yours.

21. **Let . . . not I**: let fate be blamed for it, not I.

22. **peize**: prolong.

24. **election**: See II, ix, 3.

25. **upon the rack**: I suffer as though I were being stretched on the rack. The rack—a wooden frame on which traitors (and others) were tortured in order to secure a confession—was in use in Shakespeare's day, but it is stretching the imagination to assume that Shakespeare meant this passage as a protest against the cruel method. Portia repeats the phrase in line 26, and later.

27. **treason**: in allusion to the use of the rack for traitors.

29. **fear**: doubt whether.

30-31. **There . . . love**: You may as well look for friendship between snow and fire as between treason and my love.

PORTIA. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.

BASSANIO. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

PORTIA. Well then, confess and live.

BASSANIO. Confess and love

Had been the very sum of my confession: 36

O happy torment, when my torturer

Doth teach me answers for deliverance!

But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

PORTIA. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them: 40
If you do love me, you will find me out.

Nerissa, and the rest, stand all aloof.

Let music sound while he doth make his choice;

Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,

Fading in music: that the comparison 45

May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream

And watery death-bed for him. He may win;

And what is music then? Then music is

Even as the flourish when true subjects bow

To a new-crowned monarch: such it is 50

33. **enforced**: compelled. See V, 214, and 226.

35-36. **Confess . . . confession**: My entire confession would be that I love you.

38. **deliverance from torture**.

41. **If . . . out**: Another indication that the choice of the caskets is regarded, not as a gamble, but as a test of character and of true love.

42. **Nerissa . . . aloof**: stand back. Orsino gives a similar direction in *Twelfth Night*, I, iv, 12.

44. **swan-like end**: It was a popular belief that swans sang just before they died. Emilia, stabbed by Iago, says "I will play the swan, And die in music," *Othello*, V, ii, 245-6, and in *King John*, V, vii, 20-4, Prince Henry speaks of the "pale faint swan, Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death."

45. **fading**: disappearing, dying away.

49. **flourish of trumpets**. The reference is to the custom of blowing trumpets at the crowning of a new king. This passage has been regarded as an indication of the date of composition of *The Merchant of Venice*. See Introduction, section III.

As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
 And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
 With no less presence, but with much more love,
 Than young Alcides, when he did redeem 55
 The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
 To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice;
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
 With bleared visages, come forth to view
 The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
 Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
 I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO comments on the caskets to himself

SONG

Tell me where is fancy bred,
 Or in the heart or in the head?

51. **dulcet:** soft, sweet.
in: at.

54. **presence:** fine appearance.

55. **Alcides:** See II, i, 35. Hesione, the daughter of Laomedon, King of Troy, was fastened to a rock, as a sacrifice to Neptune who was angry at Laomedon. Alcides promised to save Hesione, not because he was in love with her, but in return for a gift of horses. The *with much more love* (line 54) refers to Bassanio. But it must not be forgotten that, for all his fine speeches, Bassanio's original motive in wooing Portia is "to get clear of all the debts" he owes, and that the first thing that he tells us about Portia is that she is "richly left," I, i, 134, and 161. Of this, Portia is unaware.

57. *sea-monster sent by Neptune.* Alcides killed the monster, but Laomedon did not keep his promise.

I stand for sacrifice *like Hesione.*

58. **Dardanian:** Trojan, from Dardanus, the mythical founder of Troy.

wives: women.

59. **bleared visages:** faces stained by tears.

60. **issue:** outcome.

61. **Live thou:** if you live.

62. **fray:** attempt.

63. **fancy:** passing or temporary love. We speak of a "young man's fancy."

64. **Or:** whether.

How begot, how nourished? 65

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell; 70

I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.

ALL. Ding, dong, bell.

BASSANIO. So may the outward shows be least themselves:

The world is still deceiv'd with ornament.

In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt, 75

But, being season'd with a gracious voice,

Obscures the show of evil? In religion,

What damned error, but some sober brow

Will bless it, and approve it with a text,

Hiding the grossness with fair ornament? 80

There is no vice so simple, but assumes

Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:

How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins

67. *It . . . eyes*: a passing fancy, which is distinguished from real love, exists only in the eyes.

68-69. *and . . . lies*: Fancy is born *in the eyes*, and dies when the eyes are no longer pleased by the object which *nourished* it.

73. *So, etc.*: During the song, Bassanio has been thinking. As soon as it is over, he puts his thoughts into words, a privilege not allowed to a *maiden* (line 8).

So . . . themselves: so may the outward appearances of objects be least like themselves.

75-77. *In law . . . evil*: No matter how bad a case may be, an eloquent lawyer will hide its evil side.

78. *sober brow*: serious-looking preacher.

79. *approve . . . text*: justify it by Scripture.

80. *grossness of the damned error*.

81-82. *There . . . parts*: There is no vice so unmixed but that it will not take on some sign of good on its outside.

83-84. *as . . . sand*: because they would sink under the feet of one trying to climb them.

The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars; 85
 Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk!
 And these assume but valour's excrement
 To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
 And you shall see 't is purchas'd by the weight;
 Which therein works a miracle in nature, 90
 Making them lightest that wear most of it:
 So are those crisped snaky golden locks,
 Which makes such wanton gambols with the wind,
 Upon supposed fairness, often known
 To be the dowry of a second head, 95
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
 Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf

85. **beards:** the beard was regarded as a sign of courage.

Mars: the Roman god of War, and son of Jupiter and Juno.

86. **search'd:** probed. The use of the word shows Shakespeare's knowledge of surgery, as the term is a technical one.

livers . . . milk: a white liver was regarded as a sign of cowardice. Falstaff describes a white liver as the "badge of pusillanimity and cowardice," in the *second* part of *King Henry IV*, IV, iii, 105; Richard describes Richmond (Henry VII) as a "*white-liver'd* runagate," *Richard III*, IV, iv, 467, and the Boy says of Bardolph, "he is *white-liver'd*," *King Henry V*, III, ii, 33.

87. **assume:** See Arragon's statement, II, ix, 50.

valour's excrement: refers to the *beards* of line 85.

88. **redoubted:** formidable.

91. **lightest:** a quibble on the two meanings of the word *light*, (1) not heavy, and (2) light-headed, vain. Shakespeare was very fond of punning on this word.

92. **crisped:** curly.

snaky in appearance. The term also carries a suggestion of deceit, as the locks which have been *purchas'd by the weight* are not real.

94. **supposed fairness:** artificial beauty.

95. **dowry . . . head:** Shakespeare seems to have had very strong feelings against wearing false hair, a common custom in his day. In Sonnet 68, he describes false hair as "the golden tresses of the dead," and Timon calls it "the burdens of the dead," *Timon of Athens*, IV, iii, 144. Queen Elizabeth herself, when no longer young, wore a large yellow wig.

96. **bred in the sepulchre:** The construction is the ablative absolute.

97. **guiled:** deceitful.

Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on 100
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
 'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
 Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught, 105
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
 And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

PORTIA. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
 As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embrac'd despair,
 And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! 110
 O love, the moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
 In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess!
 I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
 For fear I surfeit!

99. **Veiling . . . beauty:** hiding a dusky beauty, with an unflattering emphasis on *Indian*. Elizabethan Englishmen did not favor women of dark complexion. Queen Elizabeth was fair, and it was the custom, in compliment to her, to praise blonde women.

102. **Midas:** the King of Phrygia, who prayed that all objects might become gold at his touch. Bacchus granted the request, and even his food and drink turned to gold. Faced with the prospect of starvation, Midas begged to have the favor recalled. At the suggestion of Bacchus, he bathed in the river Pactolus, in Lydia, and the curse was removed. Ovid (see Act 5, line 79) has told the story in his *Metamorphoses*, Book XI.

103. **drudge:** slave, because the common medium of exchange 'Tween man and man.

104. **meagre:** contrasted with *gaudy* (line 101).

106. **Thy paleness:** with emphasis on *thy*. Bassanio is repelled by the paleness of the silver, but attracted by the paleness of the lead.

108. **passions . . . air:** feelings vanish into air.

109. **doubtful thoughts:** worries.

rash-embrac'd despair: despair felt rashly before there is reason for it. See II, viii, 52.

110. **green-eyed jealousy:** people of a jealous disposition were supposed to have green eyes. Iago warns Othello to beware of "jealousy, the green-eyed monster," III, iii, 166.

112. **In measure rain:** pour down in moderation.

scant: See Portia's use of the word in II, i, 17.

114. **surfeit:** have too much. See the famous opening speech of the Duke, in *Twelfth Night*, I, i, 1-3.

BASSANIO.

What find I here?

[Opening the leaden casket]

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god 115

Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?

Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,

Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,

Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar

Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs 120

The painter plays the spider, and hath woven

A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,

Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes! —

How could he see to do them? having made one,

Methinks it should have power to steal both his 125

And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far

The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow

In underprizing it, so far this shadow

Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,

The continent and summary of my fortune: 130

[Reads] You that choose not by the view,
 Chance as fair, and choose as true!

Since this fortune falls to you,

Be content, and seek no new.

115. **counterfeit**: picture. See *Timon of Athens*, V, i, 83.

demi-god . . . creation: so near to making the picture alive.

116-118. **Move . . . motion**: Do these eyes move, or is it that (riding on my eye-balls) they seem to move?

122. **golden mesh**: another indication of the Elizabethan fondness for blonde hair.

124. **he**: i.e. the painter.

125. **his eyes**.

126. **unfurnish'd**: without the other eye.

126-129. **Yet . . . substance**: As my praise does not do justice to the portrait (*shadow*), so the portrait is inferior to the actual Portia (*substance*).

130. **continent**: that which contains, from the Latin *continere*.

If you be well pleas'd with this, 135
 And hold your fortune for your bliss,
 Turn you where your lady is,
 And claim her with a loving kiss.

A gentle scroll. — Fair lady, by your leave;
 I come by note, to give and to receive. 140
 Like one of two contending in a prize,
 That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
 Hearing applause and universal shout,
 Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt
 Whether those peals of praise be his or no; 145
 So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
 As doubtful whether what I see be true,
 Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

PORTIA. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
 Such as I am: though for myself alone 150
 I would not be ambitious in my wish,
 To wish myself much better; yet for you
 I would be trebled twenty times myself;
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;
 That, only to stand high in your account, 155
 I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
 Exceed account: but the full sum of me

139. **by your leave:** Here Bassanio carries out the action of the preceding line. The gentle Duncan uses the same phrase before kissing Lady Macbeth as she leads him to her husband, I, vi, 31.

140. **by note:** as directed by the *gentle scroll*.
 to give *a kiss* and to receive *Portia*.

141. **in:** for.

147. I see *on the scroll*.

148. **ratified:** agreed to.

155. only *in order to*.
account: esteem.

156. **livings:** lands.

Is sum of — something; which, to term in gross,
 Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd;
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old 160
 But she may learn; happier than this,
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
 Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,
 As from her lord, her governor, her king. 165
 Myself and what is mine to you and yours
 Is now converted: but now I was the lord
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
 Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
 This house, these servants, and this same myself, 170
 Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
 Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
 Let it presage the ruin of your love,
 And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

BASSANIO. Madam, you have bereft me of all words; 175
 Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;

158. **sum of—something:** Portia is searching for a term in which to describe herself to Bassanio. She wishes to do so with proper maidenly modesty, and at the same time she does not wish to appear too humble. At a loss for the exact word, after a second's hesitation, she hits upon *something* (i.e. not a great deal) as a general term which is not excessive in either direction.

term in gross: speak in general terms.

159. **unlesson'd, unschool'd, unpractis'd:** These terms do not exactly fit the Portia of Act Four.

160. **Happy:** fortunate.

167. **but now:** just a moment ago.

lord: proprietor; used, as *master* in the next line, without reference to sex. Portia uses *lord* to Bassanio several times.

171. **I . . . ring:** See *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, ii, 5-7.

174. **advantage:** in modern use, *vantage* is confined chiefly to tennis.

exclaim on: reproach, scold.

175. **bereft:** deprived. Bassanio's statement is a pardonable exaggeration, as he proceeds to deliver a rather lengthy speech for a man who has been *bereft of all words*.

And there is such confusion in my powers,
 As, after some oration fairly spoke
 By a beloved prince, there doth appear
 Among the buzzing pleased multitude; 180
 Where every something, being blent together,
 Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
 Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
 Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
 O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead! 185

NERISSA. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
 That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
 To cry, good joy. Good joy, my Lord and lady!

GRATIANO. My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
 I wish you all the joy that you can wish; 190
 For I am sure you can wish none from me.
 And, when your honours mean to solemnize
 The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
 Even at that time I may be married too. 194

BASSANIO. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

GRATIANO. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
 My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
 You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;

178. **fairly spoke**: well spoken.

181-183. **Where . . . express'd**: every sound, considered singly, expresses something, but when the different sounds blend together, they become a wild chorus, in which nothing, except joy, can be distinguished, and even that joy is expressed only in a vague manner.

186. **time**: moment.

187. *wishes for the happiness of you and Bassanio.*

191. *away from.*

192. **solemnize**: celebrate, used of a marriage. See II, ix, 6.

193. **bargain**: contract (of love).

195. **so**: provided that.

198. **maid**: Nerissa's exact position in the household has, somewhat unnecessarily, puzzled students. It is clear that she is not an ordinary

You lov'd, I lov'd; for intermission
 No more pertains to me, my lord, than you. 200
 Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
 And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
 For, wooing here, until I sweat again,
 And swearing, till my very roof was dry
 With oaths of love, at last, if promise last, 205
 I got a promise of this fair one here
 To have her love, provided that your fortune
 Achiev'd her mistress.

PORTIA. Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA. Madame, it is, so you stand pleas'd withal.

BASSANIO. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith? 210

GRATIANO. Yes, faith, my lord.

BASSANIO. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your
 marriage.

GRATIANO. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
 What, and my old Venetian friend, Salerio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA and SALERIO

BASSANIO. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither; 215
 If that the youth of my new interest here

servant, and, from the fact that Portia uses *thou* to her, it is equally clear that her social station is lower than Portia's. She is of gentle birth, or, as she is called in the Third Quarto (1637), a "wayting Gentlewoman," but throughout the play it is made plain that Portia regards her as a friend. Her relation to Portia is similar to that between Maria and Olivia in *Twelfth Night*.

199. **intermission:** wasting time.

200. than *to* you.

202. falls *out*.

204. roof *of my mouth*.

208. **achiev'd:** won.

213. **infidel:** referring to Jessica, as a non-believer in Christianity.

216-217. **If . . . welcome:** If the newness of my position here gives me the power to say so, you are welcome. Bassanio has been the *lord* of Portia's house for only a few minutes.

I know he will be glad of our success; 235
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

SALERIO. I would you had won the fleece that he hath
lost!

PORTIA. There are some shrewd contents in yon same
paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world 240
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!—
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

BASSANIO. O sweet Portia, 245
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, — I was a gentleman; 250
And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you

235. our success in winning wives.

236. We: Bassanio and Gratiano. See I, i, 169-72.

fleece: i.e. Portia and Nerissa.

238. shrewd: bad.

241. constitution: here used to mean complexion, referring to Bassanio's paleness.

242. constant: steady, self-controlled. Cæsar tells the envious Casca "I am as constant as the northern star," III, i, 60.

What, worse and worse: as Bassanio grows paler.

243. With leave: as she takes the letter from Bassanio.

249. freely: frankly.

252. Rating: estimating.

That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed, 255
 I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,
 Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,
 To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
 The paper as the body of my friend,
 And every word in it a gaping wound, 260
 Issuing life-blood. — But is it true, Salerio?
 Hath all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
 From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
 From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
 And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch 265
 Of merchant-marring rocks?

SALERIO.

Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear that, if he had
 The present money to discharge the Jew,
 He would not take it. Never did I know
 A creature, that did bear the shape of man, 270
 So keen and greedy to confound a man:
 He plies the Duke at morning and at night;
 And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
 If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,

255. worse: less.

256. engag'd: pledged.

257. mere: out-and-out, absolute; from the Latin *merus*, pure, un-

mixed.

258. feed my means: supply me with money (to woo Portia).

259. as: *being* as, representing.

261. Issuing: pouring out.

262. hit: successful. Did not one reach (*hit*) its port?

265. scape: escape.

268. present: ready. See I, i, 179, and I, iii, 49.
 to discharge *his debts* to the Jew.

271. confound: ruin.

273. impeach the freedom: deny that the Venetian state gives
 equal rights and freedom to aliens. See III, iii, 26–9, and IV, i, 38–9
 and 100.

The Duke himself, and the magnificoes 275
 Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
 But none can drive him from the envious plea
 Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

JESSICA. When I was with him, I have heard him
 swear,

To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen, 280
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
 Than twenty times the value of the sum
 That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
 If law, authority, and power deny not,
 It will go hard with poor Antonio. 285

PORTIA. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

BASSANIO. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
 The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
 In doing courtesies: and one in whom
 The ancient Roman honour more appears 290
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.

PORTIA. What sum owes he the Jew?

BASSANIO. For me three thousand ducats.

275. **magnificoes:** noblemen.

276. **importance.**

persuaded: pleaded, argued.

277. **envious:** malicious. "An *envious* thrust from Tybalt hit the life Of stout Mercutio," *Romeo and Juliet*, III, i, 174.

279. **was at home** with him. The *was* shows that some time has passed between the end of Act I and scenes ii-vi, Act II.

280. **Chus:** the name occurs in *Genesis*.

284. **deny:** forbid.

285. **It will go hard:** Shylock uses the same words in III, i, 63.

286. **Is . . . trouble:** Portia addresses Bassanio. Apparently, she has paid no attention to Jessica's speech, but note line 282 and lines 301-2.

288. **best-condition'd:** best hearted; the superlative degree is to be understood also for *unwearied*, i.e. most unwearied.

291. **Than in any other.**

293. **For me:** on my account, with emphasis on *me*. As the letter shows, Antonio has other *creditors* of whom Bassanio knows nothing.

PORTIA.

What, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;

Double six thousand, and then treble that, 295

Before a friend of this description

Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.

First go with me to church and call me wife,

And then away to Venice to your friend;

For never shall you lie by Portia's side 300

With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold

To pay the petty debt twenty times over:

When it is paid, bring your true friend along.

My maid Nerissa and myself meantime

Will live as maids and widows. Come, away! 305

For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:

Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:

Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.

But let me hear the letter of your friend. 309

BASSANIO. [*Reads*]

Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live,

During Bassanio's stay at Belmont, Antonio may have become further indebted to Shylock.

294. **deface:** cancel.

301. **unquiet:** troubled.

303. *along with you.*

305. **maids and widows:** Portia and Nerissa are married between the end of this scene and the beginning of scene iv. She means that they will live as though they were not married, and as though they had lost their husbands.

306. *go hence.*

307. **cheer:** face.

308. *dearly bought* (by Antonio). Note the pun on *dear*. See IV, i, 99.

311. **estate:** financial condition. See line 231. *forfeited.*

all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter. 315

PORTIA. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

BASSANIO. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste; but, till I come again,

No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay, 319

Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *Venice. A street*

Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, and Jailer

SHYLOCK. Jailer, look to him: tell not me of mercy. —
This is the fool that lends out money gratis. —
Jailer, look to him.

ANTONIO. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHYLOCK. I'll have my bond; speak not against my
bond:

I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond. 5

Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;

But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:

The Duke shall grant me justice. — I do wonder,

Thou naughty jailer, that thou art so fond

To come abroad with him at his request. 10

ANTONIO. I pray thee, hear me speak.

SHYLOCK. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:

313. **you and I**: Elizabethan writers regarded the phrase *you-and-I* as one not to be inflected.

314. **use your pleasure**: consider your convenience.

1. **look to**: watch.

3. **yet**: again.

9. **fond**: foolish.

10. **abroad**: out-of-doors.

I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.

I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,

To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield 15

To Christian intercessors. Follow not;

I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond. [Exit]

SALARINO. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.

ANTONIO.

Let him alone:

I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers. 20

He seeks my life; his reason well I know:

I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures

Many that have at times made moan to me;

Therefore he hates me.

SALARINO.

I am sure the Duke

Will never grant this forfeiture to hold. 25

ANTONIO. The Duke cannot deny the course of law:

For the commodity that strangers have

With us in Venice, if it be denied,

Will much impeach the justice of the state;

Since that the trade and profit of the city 30

14. sad-looking, stupid.

17. **speaking**: argument.

18. **It**: he.

impenetrable: not to be *penetrated* by pity.

19. **kept**: lived, dwelt. To this day, the phrase is in use at Cambridge, England. Cambridge students ask each other, not "Where do you live?" but "Where do you *keep*?"

20. **bootless**: vain, useless.

22-24. This is Antonio's statement of the case. For Shylock's statement see III, i, 47-51.

23. **made moan**: complained. See Bassanio's use of the phrase, I, i, 126.

25. **grant**: allow.

to hold *good*.

26. **deny**: interfere with. The Duke, although he sides with Antonio, must allow the law to take its course.

27. **commodity**: trading rights.

29. **impeach**: see line 273 of the previous scene, and IV, i, 39.

30. **trade and profit**: profitable trade, commerce.

Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
 These griefs and losses have so bated me,
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
 To-morrow to my bloody creditor. —

Well, jailer, on. — Pray God, Bassanio come 35
 To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! [*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house*

Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and BALTHASAR

LORENZO. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
 You have a noble and a true conceit
 Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
 In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
 But, if you knew to whom you show this honour, 5
 How true a gentleman you send relief,
 How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
 I know you would be prouder of the work
 Than customary bounty can enforce you.

PORTIA. I never did repent for doing good, 10
 Nor shall not now: for in companions
 That do converse and waste the time together,

31. **of all nations**: referring to the commercial relations of Venice with the eastern and western parts of the world.

32. **bated**: weakened.

33. **hardly spare**: yield, spare *with difficulty*.

2. **conceit**: idea.

3. **amity**: friendship.

7. **lover**: friend: Brutus addresses the Roman mob as lovers, and tells them that he slew Cæsar, his "*best lover*," III, ii, 13, and 52. In *Coriolanus*, Menenius Agrippa says to the First Guard, "*Thy general (Coriolanus) is my lover*," V, ii, 14.

9. **customary bounty**: ordinary goodness.
enforce: make you feel.

10. **for**: of.

11. **Nor shall not**: See II, i, 43.

12. **converse**: associate.

waste: spend. Not used, as with us, in a bad sense.

Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
 There must be needs a like proportion
 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit; 15
 Which makes me think that this Antonio,
 Being the bosom lover of my lord,
 Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
 How little is the cost I have bestow'd
 In purchasing the semblance of my soul 20
 From out the state of hellish cruelty!
 This comes too near the praising of myself;
 Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
 The husbandry and manage of my house 25
 Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
 I have toward heaven breath'd a secret vow
 To live in prayer and contemplation,
 Only attended by Nerissa here,
 Until her husband and my lord's return: 30
 There is a monastery two miles off,
 And there we will abide. I do desire you
 Not to deny this imposition,
 The which my love and some necessity
 Now lays upon you.

13. **Whose . . . love:** who love each other equally.

14. **needs:** of necessity.
proportion: resemblance.

15. **lineaments:** features.

17. **bosom:** dear, close.

20. **freeing** by purchasing.

semblance: likeness; in freeing by purchase Antonio, the likeness of Bassanio who is as my soul.

25. **husbandry:** care.

management.

33. **deny:** refuse.

imposition: task imposed on you.

LORENZO. Madam, with all my heart, 35
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

PORTIA. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
So fare you well, till we shall meet again. 40

LORENZO. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

JESSICA. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

PORTIA. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleas'd
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica. —

[*Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO*]

Now, Balthasar, 45

As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario; 50
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagin'd speed

37. **people:** servants.

mind: intention.

44. **To . . . back:** to return the compliment.

46. **honest-true:** honorable and loyal. There is really no need for the hyphen, which was inserted by Alexander Dyce.

48-9. **endeavour . . . speed:** effort of a man in speeding to, i.e. go as fast as you can.

Padua: The University of Padua, founded in the 13th century, was celebrated for its law (and medical) school. The action of *The Taming of the Shrew* takes place in Padua, and Lucentio was eager "To see fair Padua, nursery of arts," I, i, 2. Benedick, the hero of *Much Ado About Nothing*, is "a young lord of Padua."

render: give. "Let each man *render* me his bloody hand," says Mark Antony to Cæsar's murderers, III, i, 184.

50. **Doctor of Law.**

51. **notes and garments:** The *notes* are the papers containing Bellario's statement of the legal points involved; the *garments* are the robes worn by Portia in the Trial Scene.

52. **imagin'd speed:** the utmost speed that you can imagine.

Unto the tranect, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee. 55

BALTHASAR. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.
[Exit]

PORTIA. Come on, Nerissa: I have work in hand
That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

NERISSA. Shall they see us?

PORTIA. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit, 60
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace; 65
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride: and speak of frays,
Like a fine-bragging youth; and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love, 70

53. **tranect**: crossing.

common: public.

59. **of us**: of our seeing them.

60. **habit**: dress.

61. **accomplished**: supplied.

62. **that we lack**: i.e. the qualities of manhood.

63. **accoutred**: dressed, equipped. Cassius, in an effort to belittle Caesar, tells Brutus that "*Accoutred* as I was, I plunged in (the troubled Tiber)." I, ii, 104.

64. **prettier**: more blustering, swaggering.

65. **braver**: finer, smarter.

67. **reed**: shrill, characteristic of a boy whose voice is breaking.

mincing: short.

68. **Into a manly stride**: into *one* long manly step.

frays: quarrels. Portia has used the word before, III, ii, 62.

69. **quaint**: pretty, extravagant.

70. **honourable**: distinguished, noble.

Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
 I could not do withal: then I'll repent,
 And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them.
 And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell;
 That men shall swear I have discontinued school 75
 Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
 Which I will practise.
 But come; I'll tell thee all my whole device
 When I am in my coach, which stays for us 80
 At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
 For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [Exeunt]

SCENE V. *The same. A garden**Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA*

LAUNCELOT. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer; for, truly, I think you are damn'd. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither. 7

72. **I . . . withal:** A popular Elizabethan phrase, meaning I could not help it, I was not to blame.

74. **puny:** petty.

75. *so* That.

77. **raw:** clumsy, silly.

bragging Jacks: Elizabethan slang for smart fellows. Our equivalent is a "smart Alec." Another Antonio, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, attacks the defamers of his niece as "Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops!" V, i, 91.

79. **device:** plan.

82. **measure:** make, "do."

3. *fear for you.* In *Richard III*, Lord Hastings says "The king is sickly, weak, and melancholy; And his physicians *fear* him mightily," I, i, 136-7.

4. **agitation:** Launcelot means cogitation, thought.

JESSICA. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

LAUNCELOT. Marry, you may partly hope that you are not the Jew's daughter.

JESSICA. That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed: so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me. 12

LAUNCELOT. Truly then I fear you are damn'd both by father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother: well, you are gone both ways. 16

JESSICA. I shall be sav'd by my husband; he hath made me a Christian. 18

LAUNCELOT. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money. 23

JESSICA. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say: here he comes.

Enter LORENZO

LORENZO. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners. 27

9. **Marry**: an oath, By (the Virgin) Mary.

14-15. **Scylla** . . . **Charybdis**: the names of two rocks, very close to each other, between Sicily and Italy. A ship which managed to pass one rock was in equal danger of striking the other. In Homer's epic, the *Odyssey*, Book XII, Scylla and Charybdis are not the rocks, but the monsters that lived on them. Scylla, who lived on the rock nearest to Italy, was an unpleasant customer: she had twelve feet, six heads, and eighteen rows of sound teeth. Charybdis lived on the other rock, under a huge fig-tree. Three times a day, she drank the waters of the sea and then threw them up again. Therefore, to be between Scylla and Charybdis is to be between two difficulties so nearly equal as to leave little choice as to which is the more serious. The idea is the basis of our expressions, (1) "between the devil and the deep sea," and (2) "jumping from the frying-pan into the fire."

15. **gone**: lost, "done for." See lines 5 and 13.

20. **enow**: enough.

21. **by**: with.

23. **rasher** . . . **for money**: slice of bacon for *any* money.

JESSICA. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth; for, in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork. 32

LORENZO. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. — Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

LAUNCELOT. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

LORENZO. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid them prepare dinner. 38

LAUNCELOT. That is done too, sir; only, 'cover' is the word.

LORENZO. Will you cover, then, sir?

LAUNCELOT. Not, so, sir, neither; I know my duty. 42

LORENZO. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows, bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner. 47

29. **fallen out**: have quarreled. In *Julius Cæsar*, the Second Com-moner begs Marullus, one of the Tribunes, to "be not out" with him, I, i, 18.

36. **That is done**: i.e. they are prepared.
stomachs: appetites. Launcelot is punning on the two meanings of the word, inclination or desire (for anything) and appetite (for food), as Jessica does at the end of the scene.

37. **wit-snapper**: one who snaps up another's words in order to make a witticism on them. Launcelot is doing this with Lorenzo's instructions.

39. **'cover'**: lay the table-cloth.

41. **cover**: See II, ix, 43. See *As You Like It*, II, v, 28.

42. **Not . . . duty**: To Lorenzo's question, "will you cover?" (i.e. lay the cloth) Launcelot answers as if he thought that Lorenzo meant "Will you put your hat on?" As a servant who pretends to observe the proper customs between master and man, Launcelot knows that it is not his place to wear his hat in Lorenzo's presence.

43. **quarrelling with occasion**: disputing (quibbling) at every opportunity.

LAUNCELOT. For the table, sir, it shall be serv'd in; for the meat, sir, it shall be cover'd; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humors and conceits shall govern.

[Exit]

LORENZO. O dear discretion, how his words are suited! The fool hath planted in his memory 52
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word 55
Defy the matter. — How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion:
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

JESSICA. Past all expressing. It is very meet The Lord Bassanio live an upright life; 60
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not mean it, then
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match, 65

50. **conceits**: fancies.

51. **discretion**: discrimination in the use of words. suited to fit a special meaning.

54. **better place**: higher social rank.

55. **Garnish'd**: furnished. Lorenzo uses the noun, in II, vi, 45. **tricky**: smart, queer.

56. **Defy the matter**: discard the meaning. Launcelot's chief delight in life is to use big words, with little or no reference to the meaning.

cheer'st: goes it with you?

59. **expressing**: power of words to *express*. Lorenzo was entreated "past all saying nay," III, ii, 224.

meet: proper. See IV, i, 114, and 399. Brutus tells Cassius that he will "find a time Both *meet* to hear and answer such high things," I, ii, 167-8, and Mark Antony sneeringly refers to Lepidus as "a slight unmeritable man, *Meet* to be sent on errands," IV, i, 12-3.

60. *that* The Lord Bassanio *should*, etc.

63. do not mean to *live an upright life*, (line 60).

64. **reason**: justice.

And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

LORENZO. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife. 70

JESSICA. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

LORENZO. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

JESSICA. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

LORENZO. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then, howsoever thou speak'st, 'mong other things 75
I shall digest it.

JESSICA. Well, I'll set you forth. [Excunt]

66. **lay**: stake.

67. *one of the two earthly women.*

68. **Pawn'd**: wagered.

69. **fellow**: equal. See III, ii, 124-6.

73. **stomach**: appetite (for food), and a desire (to praise you). In the wordy battle which precedes the Battle of Philippi, Octavius tells Brutus and Cassius "If you dare fight to-day, come to the field; If not, when you have *stomachs*," V, i, 65-6.

76. **set you forth**: describe you thoroughly.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Venice. A court of justice*

Enter the DUKE, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO,
GRATIANO, SALERIO, and others*

DUKE. What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO. Ready, so please your Grace.

DUKE. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty 5
From any dram of mercy.

ANTONIO. I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but, since he stands obdurate,
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose 10
My patience to his fury; and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

* **Magnificoes:** see III, ii, 275.

3. **answer:** give an account to.

4. **stony:** cruel.

6. **From:** of.

dram: smallest atom.

7. **qualify:** soften.

8. **rigorous:** merciless.

obdurate: unmoved (by mercy).

9. **that:** since.

10. **envy's:** See Salerio's words, III, ii, 277.

11. **patience:** calmness (in time of trouble). Lorenzo uses the word in a different sense in II, vi, 21. For various uses of *patience* in *Twelfth Night*, see II, i, 3, II, iv, 16, and II, v, 78.

arm'd: prepared. See line 259.

12. **quietness of spirit:** calm resignation.

13. **very:** utmost.

his *spirit*.

DUKE. Go one, and call the Jew into the court. 14

SALERIO. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK

DUKE. Make room, and let him stand before our face. —
 Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
 That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
 To the last hour of act; and then 't is thought
 Thou 'lt show thy mercy and remorse, more strange 20
 Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
 And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
 Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
 But, touch'd with human gentleness and love, 25
 Forgive a moiety of the principal;
 Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
 That have of late so huddled on his back,
 Enow to press a royal merchant down,
 And pluck commiseration of his state 30
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,

16. **let him stand before our face:** *our* is used to lend a touch of dignity and impressiveness. The Duke, fully aware of the strength of Shylock's case, is evidently trying to scare him. "Set him before me; let me see his face," says Cæsar of the Soothsayer who has tried to warn him, I, ii, 20.

18-19. **That . . . act:** keep up this show of malice until the last minute.

20. **remorse:** pity. Lady Macbeth calls upon the evil spirits to "Stop up th' access and passage to *remorse*," I, v, 44.

21. **apparent:** seeming.

22. **whereas.**

24. **loose:** remit.

25. **touch'd:** moved.

26. **moiety:** part.

27. **Glancing:** casting.

28. **huddled:** crowded.

30. **pluck commiseration of:** extract sympathy for.

From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew. 34

SHYLOCK. I have possess'd your Grace of what I
purpose;

And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have 40
A weight of carrion-flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
But, say, it is my humour; is it answer'd?
What if my house be troubl'd with a rat,
And I be pleas'd to give ten thousand ducats 45

32. **Turks and Tartars:** merciless people. The Elizabethan looked upon Turks and Tartars as cruel and heartless. In their eyes, a Turk was a "stony adversary." Helena, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, expresses the same idea, "gratitude Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth," IV, iv, 6-7. "Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips" were two of the ingredients of the hell-broth made by the Witches, *Macbeth*, IV, i, 29.

33. **courtesy:** kindness.

34. **gentle:** See Gratiano's pun, II, vi, 51.

35. **possess'd:** See Antonio's question, I, iii, 60.

37. **forfeit:** penalty.

38. **deny:** See Antonio's statement, III, iii, 26-31.

light: fall. See III, i, 83.

39. **Upon your charter:** Venice was a free republic, and, as such, not dependent on a charter from royal authority. Shakespeare makes Shylock speak as though Venice were like London, which held a charter from Henry I (1068-1135). Shylock regards the Duke as the agent of a superior officer who has granted him a charter. This is Shylock's chief argument. See what Salerio and Antonio say, III, ii, 273-4, III, iii, 26-31, and IV, i, 100.

41. **carrion:** dead. See II, vii, 63, III, i, 31. Antony, left alone with the dead body of Cæsar, prophesies "That this foul deed shall smell above the earth With carrion men, groaning for burial," III, i, 274-5.

43. **let us say.**

humour: whim.

is it answer'd: is that an answer for you?

To have it ban'd! What, are you answer'd yet?
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
 Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
 And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose.
 Master of passion sways it to the mood 50
 Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
 As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
 Why, he, a harmless necessary cat;
 Why he, a woollen bag-pipe, but of force 55
 Must yield to such inevitable shame
 As to offend, himself being offended;
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
 More than a lodg'd hate and a certain loathing
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus 60
 A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

BASSANIO. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
 To excuse the current of thy cruelty. 63

SHYLOCK. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

BASSANIO. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

SHYLOCK. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO. Every offence is not a hate at first. 67

SHYLOCK. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee
 twice?

46. **ban'd**: poisoned.

47. **love not**: cannot stand.

gaping pig: pig's head, as served at the table. At Queen's College, Oxford, England, it is still a Christmas custom to bring to table a pig's head with a lemon in its mouth.

48. **mad**: enraged.

52. **firm**: logical.

59. **lodg'd**: deeply-rooted.

certain: fixed, definite.

63. **current**: course.

67. **offence**: resentment.

ANTONIO. I pray you, think you question with the Jew.
 You may as well go stand upon the beach, 70
 And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
 You may as well use question with the wolf,
 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
 You may as well forbid the mountain pines
 To wag their high tops, and to make no noise, 75
 When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;
 You may as well do anything most hard,
 As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
 His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you,
 Make no more offers, use no further means; 80
 But with all brief and plain conveniency
 Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

BASSANIO. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

SHYLOCK. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
 Were in six parts, and every part a ducat, 85
 I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

DUKE. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

SHYLOCK. What judgment shall I dread, doing no
 wrong?

You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
 Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules, 90

69. **think you question:** consider that you are discussing.

71. **main flood:** ocean.

bate: diminish. Antonio uses the word with reference to himself in III, iii, 32.

72. **use question with:** ask.

75. **wag:** move.

76. **fretted:** stirred violently.

81. **brief . . . conveniency:** the briefness and plainness suitable (to the conduct of the court).

82. **judgment:** sentence.

86. **draw:** take them (from the table).

88. **judgment:** punishment.

You use in abject and in slavish parts,
 Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
 Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
 Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
 Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates 95
 Be season'd with such viands? You will answer,
 'The slaves are ours.' — So do I answer you:
 The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
 Is dearly bought; 't is mine, and I will have it.
 If you deny me, fie upon your law! 100
 There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
 I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

DUKE. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
 Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
 Whom I have sent for to determine this, 105
 Come here to-day.

SALERIO. My lord, here stays without
 A messenger with letters from the doctor,
 New come from Padua.

DUKE. Bring us the letters; call the messenger. 109

BASSANIO. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
 The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all.

91. **abject**: low.

parts: tasks.

95. **palates**: tastes in food.

96. **season'd**: pleased.

such viands: i.e. viands such as yours.

99. **dearly bought**: See III, ii, 308.

102. **judgment**: justice. Note the different senses in which the word is used in this scene.

103. **Upon my power**: by virtue of the authority vested in me. We still apply this meaning of the phrase to institutions, and to official representatives of lawful authority.

105. **determine**: decide.

106. **stays without**: waits outside.

108. **newly**: just.

Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

ANTONIO. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me: 115
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk

DUKE. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

NERISSA. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your Grace.

[Presenting a letter]

BASSANIO. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

GRATIANO. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can, 123

No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness

Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

SHYLOCK. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRATIANO. O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accus'd.

113. **tainted wether**: diseased sheep.

114. **Meetest**: most fit.

114-115. **the . . . Drops . . . ground**: "The ripest fruit falls first," says the King, *Richard II*, II, i, 153.

117. **epitaph**: memorial inscription on a tomb.

120. **whet**: sharpen. In the *second* part of *King Henry IV*, the dying monarch reproaches his son, Prince Henry, with hiding "a thousand daggers in thy thoughts, Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart," IV, v, 106-7.

122. **sole . . . soul**: Shakespeare was very fond of quibbling on these two words. An earlier example is in *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 15, and a later one in *Julius Caesar*, I, i, 15.

124. **hangman's**: executioner (of any kind).

125. **envy**: See III, ii, 277, and line 10 of this scene.

127. **inexecrable**: not to be execrated, i.e. that cannot be cursed sufficiently.

128. **And . . . accus'd**: let justice be accused of committing a crime in allowing you to live.

Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,
 To hold opinion with Pythagoras, 130
 That souls of animals infuse themselves
 Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
 Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
 Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
 And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam, 135
 Infus'd itself in thee; for thy desires
 Are wolfish, bloody, starv'd, and ravenous.

SHYLOCK. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
 Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
 Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall 140
 To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

DUKE. This letter from Bellario doth commend
 A young and learned doctor to our court. —
 Where is he?

129. **waver:** change.

in my faith *as a Christian*.

130. **To hold:** to accept, adopt.

Pythagoras: an ancient Greek philosopher, born about 582 B. C. The theory, mentioned by Gratiano, that the souls of animals, at their death, pass into the bodies of men, is known as the transmigration of souls, or metempsychosis. Pythagoras is famous also in the history of medicine as the founder of a system of dieting. Rosalind declares that she "was never so berimed since *Pythagoras'* time," *As You Like It*, III, ii, 172, and Feste, the clown, tests Malvolio's sanity by asking him "What is the opinion of *Pythagoras* concerning wild fowl?" *Twelfth Night*, IV, ii, 51, 59.

131. **infuse:** pour.

132. **currish:** Gratiano uses the word again in this scene, line 287.

133. **Govern'd:** inhabited.

134. **fell:** evil, cruel.

fleet: fly. Portia uses the term when Bassanio chooses the right casket, III, ii, 108.

137. **starv'd:** as an animal when *starved*.

138. **rail:** scold, talk off.

139. **offend'st:** harm.

141. **cureless:** past cure.

I stand here for law: not to listen to your abuse, or your attempts at wit. See line 102.

NERISSA. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him. 145

DUKE. With all my heart. — Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place. —
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter. 148

[Reads]

Your Grace shall understand, that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turn'd o'er many books together: he is furnish'd with my opinion; which, better'd with his own learning, — the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, — comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your Grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation. 161

You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come. —

144. *attendeth*: waits.

hard by: near at hand.

147. *conduct*: guidance.

150. *in the instant*: at the moment.

151. *loving visitation*: friendly visit.

152. *cause in controversy*: case in dispute.

156. *importunity*: request.

157. *fill up*: fulfill.

157-159. *I . . . estimation*: I beg you not to deny him a respectful consideration because of his youth.

159. *so young . . . head*: See the verse on the scroll drawn by Morocco, II, vii, 71.

160-161. *whose . . . commendation*: his conduct in handling the trial will make his merits clearer than my letter can.

Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of laws

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA. I did, my lord.

DUKE. You are welcome: take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference 166

That holds this present question in the court?

PORTIA. I am informed throughly of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

DUKE. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth. 170

PORTIA. Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK. Shylock is my name.

PORTIA. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;

Yet in such rule, that the Venetian law

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed. —

[To ANTONIO] You stand within his danger, do you
not? 175

ANTONIO. Ay, so he says.

PORTIA. Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO. I do.

PORTIA. Then must the Jew be merciful.

165. **take your place:** as judge, by my side, or near me.

166. **difference:** dispute. The Duke's question seems to be unnecessary, as Bellario's letter has just told him the "young doctor" has been "acquainted with the cause in controversy." Perhaps he asks the question for the sake of politeness.

167. **That . . . court:** that brings this case before the court.

168. **thoroughly:** thoroughly.

173-174. **Yet . . . proceed:** yet in such accordance with legal form, that the Venetian law cannot raise any objections. We speak of actions as being "within the law" when they are so carried out as to be in no danger of legal punishment, although they are morally wrong.

175. **within his danger:** within his *power of inflicting* danger.

176. **confess:** admit to.

177. **must:** should, ought.

SHYLOCK. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

PORTIA. The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven 180
 Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
 It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
 'T is mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown;
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power, 185
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself; 190
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this, —
 That, in the course of justice, none of us

178. On . . . must I: By what law am I compelled to be merciful? Shylock uses *must* in its legal meaning, and addresses Portia as though she had used the word in the same way.

179. strain'd: constrained, forced. Portia means that mercy comes naturally (because it is *in* the person bestowing it) not because of the application of outside force or power. In other words, "There is no compulsion," in direct answer to Shylock.

183. 'T is mightiest in the mightiest: it is greatest in those who have the greatest power.

becomes: suits. For another speech advocating mercy, see *Measure for Measure*, II, ii, 59-63, where Isabella pleads to Angelo for the life of her brother, Claudio.

185. sceptre: royal wand.

force: strength.

temporal: earthly.

186. attribute: essential characteristic (sign or mark) needed to inspire awe and majesty; attribute refers to *temporal power*, not to *sceptre*.

187. wherein doth sit: on which depends, or rests.

191. show: seem, appear.

192. seasons: tempers.

193. Though justice be thy plea: although you ask for strict justice, and nothing else.

194. in . . . justice: if the law (strict justice) always took its course.



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EDITH EVANS AS PORTIA

Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy; 195

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

To mitigate the justice of thy plea;

Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice

Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there 200

SHYLOCK. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,

The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

PORTIA. Is he not able to discharge the money?

BASSANIO. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;

Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice, 205

I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,

On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:

If this will not suffice, it must appear

That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,

Wrest once the law to your authority: 210

To do a great right, do a little wrong;

And curb this cruel devil of his will.

195. **Should:** would.

salvation *for our sins*.

pray for mercy *in the Lord's Prayer*.

198. **mitigate . . . plea:** to soften (reduce) your demand for legal justice.

199. **follow:** insist on.

strict: just, fair, impartial.

201. **My deeds upon my head:** i.e. I will be responsible for my own deeds; I will accept punishment for them.

crave: demand.

203. **discharge:** pay. See Salerio's use of the word, III, ii, 268.

204. **in the court:** See lines 333 and 384.

207. **On pain of forfeiting.**

209. **malice bears down truth:** is stronger than honesty. Bassanio means that the malice of Shylock (in seeking Antonio's life) is stronger than the honesty (willingness to pay) of Antonio.

210. **Wrest once:** for this one occasion, twist. The full meaning is Do not submit to the law which you are here to carry out, but force it, in this case, to submit to *your* authority.

211. **To . . . wrong:** To administer *real* justice, disregard the *law*.

212. **curb . . . of his will:** prevent . . . from having his own way.

PORTIA. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:

'T will be recorded for a precedent; 215
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

SHYLOCK. A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

PORTIA. I pray you, let me look upon the bond. 220

SHYLOCK. Here 't is, most reverend doctor; here it is.

PORTIA. Shylock, there 's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

SHYLOCK. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

PORTIA. Why, this bond is forfeit; 225
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. — Be merciful;
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

SHYLOCK. When it is paid according to the tenour. 230
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,

213-217. Portia has obtained this knowledge from Bellario.

215. **precedent:** Portia means that if the court should be moved by Bassanio's request, the decision handed down would be used by lawyers in future cases.

216. **error:** wrong decision.

218. **Daniel:** The reference is to the story of Susannah and the Elders, which is told in the Apocryphal Book. Susannah was falsely accused by two elders, but she was saved by Daniel, a wise youth, who cross-examined them separately. The conflicting nature of their stories made it clear to the judges that they were lying, and Susannah was declared innocent, (V, 45). See also *Ezekiel*, XXVIII, 3, and *Daniel*, VI, 3.

225. **for all the money in Venice.**

230. **tenour:** terms of the bond.

232. **exposition:** statement.

Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear 235
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

ANTONIO. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

PORTIA. Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife. 240

SHYLOCK. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

SHYLOCK. 'T is very true. O wise and upright judge! 245
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

PORTIA. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

SHYLOCK. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond:—doth it not, noble judge?—
Nearest his heart: those are the very words.

PORTIA. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh 250
The flesh?

SHYLOCK. I have them ready.

PORTIA. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

234. **pillar**: exponent, advocate.

235. **Proceed to judgment**: pass sentence.

236-7. Shylock is using the very words of Portia, line 213-4.

243. **Hath full relation**: apply fully.

246. **more elder**: the emphatic double comparative.

250. balances, scales. The singular form was often used, instead of the plural, when the singular ended in an *s* sound or *ce*. It is difficult for the tongue to add an *s* to a word already ending with an *s*.

252. *by you*, close at hand.

on your charge: at your expense.

254. **nominated**: provided.

SHYLOCK. Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA. It is not so express'd; but what of that? 255
'T were good you do so much for charity.

SHYLOCK. I cannot find it; 't is not in the bond.

PORTIA. Come, merchant, have you any thing to say?

ANTONIO. But little: I am arm'd and well prepar'd. —
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well! 260

Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow 265

An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such a misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife:

Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death; 270

And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge

Whether Bassanio had not once a love.

Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,

And he repents not that he pays your debt;

For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough, 275

256. **'twere good you do:** it would be for your good to do.
for: out of.

259. **arm'd** "*with a quietness of spirit.*"

261. **fall'n:** reduced.
this condition.

262. **herein:** in my case.

263. **still her use:** always her custom.

266. **An old age.**

lingering penance: long-drawn-out penalty.

268. **honourable wife:** Antonio refers to Bassanio's Portia in the terms used by Brutus to his Portia. See *Julius Caesar*, II, i, 288.

269. **process:** manner, the details.

270. **speak . . . death:** speak well of me after my death. Hamlet makes a similar request to his friend, Horatio, V, ii, 355-60.

272. **love:** i.e. lover friend. See III, iv, 7; V, 11, 16, 22, 168.

273. **Repent but you:** show but a little grief.



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PORTIA AND SHYLOCK IN COURT

I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

BASSANIO. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life: 280
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

PORTIA. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

GRATIANO. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love: 285
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

NERISSA. 'T is well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

SHYLOCK. [*Aside*] These be the Christian husbands!
I have a daughter— 290

Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
[*Aloud*] We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

PORTIA. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it. 295

SHYLOCK. Most rightful judge!

276. **with all my heart:** Shakespeare's characters frequently jest when at the point of death. King John makes puns as he is dying, *King John*, V, vii, 35, 42, and so does John of Gaunt, in *Richard II.* II, i, 73-83. That merry monarch, Charles II, joked with his attendants while on his death-bed.

278. **Which:** who.

286. **so:** so that, if only.

289. **else:** otherwise.

291. **stock:** race, descendants.

Barrabas: the leader of the Jewish robbers, who was set free by Pilate at the request of the Jews. See *Matthew*, XXVII, 16; *Mark*, XV, 7; *Luke*, XXIII, 18.

293. **trifle with time:** waste.

PORTIA. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

SHYLOCK. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come,
prepare!

PORTIA. Tarry a little; there is something else. 300
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are, "a pound of flesh";
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods 305
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned
judge!

SHYLOCK. Is that the law!

PORTIA. Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assur'd 310
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

GRATIANO. O learned judge! — Mark, Jew: a learned
judge!

SHYLOCK. I take this offer, then; — pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

BASSANIO. Here is the money.

PORTIA. Soft! 315

299. A sentence *has been declared!*

301. *jot*: smallest portion, iota, drop. "I'll not stay a *jot* longer," declares Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and when Antonio, on being arrested, says "You do mistake me, sir," the First Officer replies 'No, sir, no *jot*.' *Twelfth Night*, III, ii, 1, and III, iv, 346.

306. *confiscated*.

309. *act*: decree.

310–311. *as . . . justice*: as you argued for justice (without mercy) . . . you shall have justice (without mercy).

315. *Soft*: stop, wait. Olivia uses the expression in the same way in *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 300.

The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:

He shall have nothing but the penalty.

GRATIANO. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

PORTIA. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less nor more 320

But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more

Or less than a just pound, — be it but so much

As makes it light or heavy in the substance,

Or the division of the twentieth part

Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn 325

But in the estimation of a hair, —

Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRATIANO. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

PORTIA. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy

forfeiture. 330

SHYLOCK. Give me my principal, and let me go.

BASSANIO. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

PORTIA. He hath refus'd it in the open court:

He shall have merely justice and his bond.

GRATIANO. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel! 335

I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

SHYLOCK. Shall I not have barely my principal?

PORTIA. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,

316. all justice, *but nothing more*.

322. just: exact.

323. substance: weight.

324-325. twentieth part Of one poor scruple: the scruple is a weight of twenty grains, used by druggists.

poor scruple: very small quantity.

326. estimation: reckoning.

329. on the hip: see I, iii, 42.

334. merely: only, nothing but.

337. barely: even.

To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

SHYLOCK. Why, then the devil give him good of it! 340
I'll stay no longer question.

PORTIA.

Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you.

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,

If it be proved against an alien

That by direct or indirect attempts 345

He seek the life of any citizen,

The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive

Shall seize one half his goods; the other half

Comes to the privy coffer of the state;

And the offender's life lies in the mercy 350

Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.

In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;

For it appears, by manifest proceeding,

That indirectly, and directly too,

Thou hast contriv'd against the very life 355

Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd

The danger formerly by me rehears'd.

339. **To be so taken:** as Portia has explained in lines 319-327.

341. **I'll . . . question:** I'll not stay here any longer to argue with you.

344. **alien:** foreigner. As a Jew, Shylock was so regarded.

345. **direct:** directly expressed in the bond.

indirect: the bond did not state that Shylock sought Antonio's life, but the carrying out of its terms would naturally cause his death.

346. **citizen of Venice.**

347. **party:** individual, the legal term, as used in contracts.

contrive: plot, conspire.

349. **privy coffer:** private treasury.

350. **mercy:** power.

351. **voice:** decision.

352. **predicament:** difficulty.

stand'st: See line 175.

353. **manifest proceeding:** simple evidence.

357. **rehears'd:** mentioned.

Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

GRATIANO. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state, 360
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;

Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

DUKE. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:

For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's; 365

The other half comes to the general state,

Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

PORTIA. Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.

SHYLOCK. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:

You take my house, when you do take the prop 370

That doth sustain my house; you take my life,

When you do take the means whereby I live.

PORTIA. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

GRATIANO. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

ANTONIO. So please my lord the Duke and all the court

To quit the fine for one half of his goods, 376

I am content; so he will let me have

358. Down on your knees.

363. spirits: natures.

365. as For.

367. Which . . . fine: which (i.e. the penalty of giving half your wealth to the state) may be reduced to a fine by your throwing yourself on my mercy.

368. Ay, for the state, etc.: Portia is looking out for Antonio's interests. She is willing to have the fine apply to that half of Shylock's wealth which is to go to the state, but she insists that Antonio is to receive his half without any reduction.

369. pardon not that: do not grant me my life, if you take the means whereby I live. Shylock here expresses an elementary truth in economics, the use of wealth to produce further wealth is necessary for life. Antonio expresses the same idea in V, 259-61.

374. A halter: See Launcelot's remark to his father, II, ii, 98.

376. quit: remit, cease demanding.

The other half in use, to render it,
 Upon his death, unto the gentleman
 That lately stole his daughter: 380
 Two things provided more, — that, for this favour,
 He presently become a Christian;
 The other, that he do record a gift,
 Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
 Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter. 385

DUKE. He shall do this; or else I do recant
 The pardon that I late pronounced here.

PORTIA. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

SHYLOCK. I am content.

PORTIA. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHYLOCK. I pray you, give me leave to go from
 hence; 390

I am not well: send the deed after me,
 And I will sign it.

DUKE. Get thee gone, but do it.

GRATIANO. In christening shalt thou have two
 godfathers:

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
 To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font. [Exit SHY-
 LOCK]

DUKE. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner. 396

PORTIA. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon:

378. **in use**: in trust (for Lorenzo and Jessica).

383. **record**: register.

386. **recant**: recall.

394. **ten more godfathers**: i.e. twelve members of a jury, to try you for attempted murder. The joke of calling jurymen *godfathers* is not original with Shakespeare. Whatever else may be said about Gratiano, he is certainly not a sportsman.

396. **entreat**: invite.

397. **I . . . pardon**: I must ask you to excuse me.

I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

DUKE. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not. — 400
Antonio, gratify this gentleman;
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt the DUKE and his train*]

BASSANIO. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof, 405
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

ANTONIO. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

PORTIA. He is well paid that is well satisfied; 410
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.

[*To BASSANIO*] I pray you, know me when we meet again:

[*To ANTONIO*] I wish you well, and so I take my leave. 415

BASSANIO. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you
further:

Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,

400. **leisure serves you not**: See Salarino's phrase, I, i, 68.

401. **gratify**: reward.

402. **bound**: obliged. See V, 135-7.

404. **acquitted Of**: released from. See V, 138.

405. **in lieu whereof**: in return for which.

407. **cope**: offer as an equivalent for.

413. **My . . . mercenary**: My mind has never required a greater payment than the satisfaction of having done a good deed.

414. **know me**: Portia is quibbling on the two meanings (1) recognise, and (2) regard this meeting as an introduction.

416. **force**: necessity.

attempt: urge, beg.

417. **tribute**: gift, token of esteem.

Not to deny me, and to pardon me. 419

PORTIA. You press me far, and therefore I will yield. —
[To ANTONIO] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for
your sake; —

[To BASSANIO] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from
you.

Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

BASSANIO. This ring, good sir, — alas, it is a trifle! 425
I will not shame myself to give you this.

PORTIA. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

BASSANIO. There's more depends on this than on the
value.

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you, 430
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

PORTIA. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd. 435

BASSANIO. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

PORTIA. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An' if your wife be not a mad-woman, 440
And know how well I have deserv'd this ring,

419. **Not . . . me:** not to refuse (my request), and to pardon me (for urging you).

422. **for your love:** See I, iii, 162.

428. **mind to:** strong liking for.

433. **liberal:** free. See II, ii, 171.

437. put it on *my finger*.

She would not hold out enemy for ever
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt* PORTIA and NERISSA]

ANTONIO. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings, and my love withal, 445
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.

BASSANIO. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring; and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house. Away! make haste. —

[*Exit* GRATIANO]

Come, you and I will thither presently; 450
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *The same. A street*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

PORTIA. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed,
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night,
And be a day before our husbands home.
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en: 5
My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice,
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

PORTIA. That cannot be:

442. *hold out enemy*: be angry with you.

1. *Inquire . . . out*: find out by inquiring.

4. *well*: very.

6. *more advice*: further consideration.

His ring I do accept most thankfully;

And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore. 10

I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

GRATIANO. That will I do.

NERISSA. Sir, I would speak with you. —

[*Aside to PORTIA*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

PORTIA. [*Aside to NERISSA*] Thou mayst, I warrant.

We shall have old swearing 15

That they did give the rings away to men;

But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.

[*Aloud*] Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will
tarry.

NERISSA. Come, good sir: will you show me to this
house? [*Exeunt*]

15. *old*: strong.

ACT V

SCENE I. *Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house*

Enter LORENZO and JESSICA

LORENZO. The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise, — in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls,
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents, 5
Where Cressid lay that night.

JESSICA. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,

4. **Troilus:** one of the fifty sons of Priam, King of Troy. He fell in love with Cressida, daughter of Calchas, a Trojan priest, when she was captured by the Trojans. They exchanged gifts, and swore to be true to each other. Soon after, Cressida was exchanged for three princes of Troy who had been captured by Diomedes, a Grecian commander. She so far forgot her vows as to give Diomedes the sleeve which Troilus had given her as a mark of his love. Cressida has come down to us as the type of female fickleness. Feste, who may be regarded as a cousin to Launcelot Gobbo, mentions Cressida, *Twelfth Night*, III, i, and Benedick, a young lord of Padua, mentions Troilus, *Much Ado About Nothing*, V, ii, 29. Chaucer ([?] 1340-1400) has told their story in his *Troilus and Criseyde*, and Shakespeare has done the same in *Troilus and Cressida*.

5. **sigh'd his soul:** breathed out his soul in sighs (of love).

7. **Thisbe:** a beautiful maiden of Babylon. She loved, and was loved by, Pyramus, but their parents objected to the union. However, as love will find a way, they managed to talk to each other through a small opening in the garden wall which separated their houses. They agreed to meet by the Tomb of Ninus, outside the city. Thisbe arrived early, but was scared away by the roar of a lion. In her fright, she dropped her cloak which the enraged lion tore up. A few moments later, Pyramus arrived, and seeing the blood-stained cloak, he unwisely came to the conclusion that Thisbe had been eaten by the lion. Frantic with despair, he slew himself under the shade of a mulberry tree. Thisbe returned, and killed herself when she found Pyramus dead. In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the love story of Pyramus and Thisbe is "acted" by Bottom and his comrades before Theseus, the Duke of Athens. The story is found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book IV), in Chaucer's *Legend of Thisbe of Babylon*, and in the *Confessio Amantis* of John Gower (1325-1408), Chaucer's friend.

And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.

LORENZO. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand 10
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

JESSICA. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

LORENZO. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew, 15
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he lov'd her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

8. **saw . . . himself**: saw the lion's reflection before (she saw) the lion.

10. **Dido**: the Queen of Carthage. Æneas, the founder of the Roman race, visited her court after the fall of Troy, and Dido fell in love with him. He returned her love, but the gods commanded him to leave Carthage and to set sail for Italy. He did so, leaving Dido broken-hearted. She ended her life by lighting a funeral pyre and throwing herself on it. Virgil tells the story in his epic poem, the *Æneid*.

10. **willow**: the emblem of forsaken love.

11. **wafted**.

lover, i.e. Æneas.

13. **Medea**: See I, i, 170-2.

14. **Æson**: King of Iolcus, and father of Jason. He was deposed by his brother, Pelias, (as Prospero was by Antonio, in *The Tempest*, and as the Duke was by Frederick, in *As You Like It*). When Jason returned with the Golden Fleece, he found his old father still living. Medea, for love of Jason, used "enchanted herbs" to restore Æson to youth.

15. **steal from**: Another pun. *Steal* is used in a double sense, (1) *steal away from*, and (2) *steal ducats and jewels*. Medea robbed her own father and ran away with Jason, just as Jessica robbed Shylock and ran away with Lorenzo.

16. **unthrift**: extravagant.

19. **vows of faith**: promises to be true.

LORENZO. In such a night 20
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave her.

JESSICA. I would out-night you, did no body come:
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO

LORENZO. Who comes so fast in silence of the night? 25

STEPHANO. A friend.

LORENZO. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray
you, friend?

STEPHANO. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about 30
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

LORENZO. Who comes with her?

STEPHANO. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd? 34

LORENZO. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.—
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare

21. **shrew**: scolding woman.

22. **Slander**: defame.

23. **out-night**: excel you in recalling famous events that happened
“in such a night.” See IV, ii, 17.

24. **footing**: step.

31. **holy crosses**: set up at roadsides in Roman Catholic countries,
to commemorate the birth of saints, and for the prayers of adherents of
the faith.

33. **holy hermit**: This character does not appear in the play. Did
Shakespeare forget about him, or was there a holy hermit in an earlier
form of the play, or in *another* play on the same subject? Feste, mas-
querading as Sir Topas, the curate, quotes “the old *hermit* of Prague,”
(*Twelfth Night*, IV, ii, 12–13) a creature of his own imagination.

37. **ceremoniously**: with proper ceremony.

Some welcome for the mistress of the house. 38

Enter LAUNCELOT

LAUNCELOT. Sola, sola! wo, ha, ho! sola, sola!

LORENZO. Who calls? 40

LAUNCELOT. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

LORENZO. Leave hollaing, man: here.

LAUNCELOT. Sola! where? where?

LORENZO. Here. 45

LAUNCELOT. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. *[Exit]*

LORENZO. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter: why should we go in? — 50

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air. —

[Exit STEPHANO]

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music 55

Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night

Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Sit, Jessica. Look, how the floor of heaven

Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:

46. **post**: messenger. See II, ix, 99.

47. **post-horn**: used by the messenger to announce his approach. Launcelot's cries are an attempt to imitate the sound of the posthorn.

49. **expect**: See II, v, 20.

51. **signify**: make it known.

53. **music**: band of musicians.

57. **Become**: See IV, i, 183.

58. **floor of heaven**: the sky.

59. **patines of bright gold**: metal plates, i.e. the stars.

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st 60
 But in his motion like an angel sings,
 Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins:
 Such harmony is in immortal souls;
 But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
 Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. — 65

Enter Musicians

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn!
 With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
 And draw her home with music. [Music]

JESSICA. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

LORENZO. The reason is, your spirits are attentive: 70
 For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
 Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
 Which is the hot condition of their blood;
 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound, 75
 Or any air of music touch their ears,
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
 Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,

61. **in his motion:** as it moves.

62. **quiring:** singing.

cherubins: angels. Our plural forms are *cherubs* or *cherubims*.

64. **muddy vesture of decay:** the body.

65. **it:** the *harmony*.

66. **Diana:** See I, ii, 98.

67. **touches:** notes. See line 57.

70. **attentive:** wrapped up in the music, engrossed.

72. **race:** breed.

unhandled: unbroken.

73. **Fetching:** making.

74. Which is a *sign of*.

76. **touch:** reach.

77. **mutual stand:** common stand-still.

78. **savage:** wild, untamed.

modest: docile, tame.

By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
 Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods; 80
 Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
 But music for the time doth change his nature.
 The man that hath no music in himself,
 Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; 85
 The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
 And his affections dark as Erebus:
 Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

PORTIA. That light we see is burning in my hall.
 How far that little candle throws his beams! 90
 So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

79. **the poet:** Publius Ovidius Naso, commonly called Ovid, born 43 B. C. died 18 A. D. The story of Orpheus is told in Ovid's masterpiece, the *Metamorphoses*, in fifteen books. Orpheus' adventures are related in Books X and XI.

80. **Orpheus:** the son of Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry. So great was his skill with the lyre (given to him by Apollo) that he charmed, not only animals, but trees and rocks. He went with Jason on his expedition to gain the Golden Fleece. In *Henry VIII*, Queen Katharine, "sad with troubles," has one of her women sing to her about the wonderful powers of Orpheus' music, III, i, 3-14. Proteus, advising the foolish Thurio how to win Silvia, tells him that "Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews, Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones," *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III, ii, 78-9.

81. **stockish:** stupid, dull; like a stick (without feeling).

82. **his:** its.

83-88. **The man . . . trusted:** See Cæsar's description of Cassius, I, ii, 201.

85. **stratagems:** plots.

spoils: (acts of) spoilation, plunder.

86. **motions:** actions.

spirit: mind.

87. **Erebus:** The dark and gloomy region between Earth and Hell. Here, the souls of the virtuous waited until they passed to Elysium, the abode of bliss. The region takes its name from Erebus (darkness) the son of Chaos. Of conspiracy, Brutus says "Not *Erebus* itself were dim enough To hide thee from prevention," *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 84-5.

88. **Mark:** pay attention to. See I, iii, 89.

NERISSA. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

PORTIA. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king,
Until a king be by; and then his state 95
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

NERISSA. It is your music, madam, of the house.

PORTIA. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day. 100

NERISSA. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

PORTIA. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither is attended; and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought 105
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection! —
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion,

93. **the greater . . . the less:** the moon . . . the candle.

94. **as brightly.**

95. **by:** present. See IV, i, 144, and 252.

state: splendor.

96-97. **Empties . . . waters:** loses itself in the ocean. Portia means that the pomp of the substitute (Lorenzo) is dimmed by the splendor of the king (Bassanio).

98. **your music . . . of the house:** i.e. the musicians of your household.

99. **without respect:** without considering other circumstances, i.e. in itself.

100. **Methinks . . . day:** Portia agrees with Lorenzo. See lines 56-7.

103. **attended:** listened to.

107-108. **How . . . perfection:** How many things are rightly appreciated by us because they come at the proper season.

109. **Peace, ho:** an expression to command silence. The blunt Casca uses it, "*Peace, ho!* Cæsar speaks," I, ii, 1.

109. **Endymion:** a beautiful youth, who tended the sheep on Mount Latmus. He was beloved by Diana, the goddess of the moon, who put him into an everlasting sleep so that she might come down every night

And would not be awak'd. [Music ceases]

LORENZO. That is the voice, 110
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

PORTIA. He knows me, as the blind man knows the
cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

LORENZO. Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words. 115
Are they return'd?

LORENZO. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

PORTIA. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence; — 120
Nor you, Lorenzo; — Jessica, nor you. [*A tucket sounds*]

LORENZO. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

PORTIA. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 't is a day, 125
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers

BASSANIO. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

from Heaven to kiss him. John Keats (1795–1821) has told the story in his great poem, *Endymion*, 1818.

110. And would not *want* to be awak'd.

115. *speed*: prosper.

118. *signify*: See line 51.

121. *tucket*: flourish of music on a trumpet.

127–128. *We . . . sun*: Bassanio is paying Portia an extravagant compliment: We should have daylight at the same time as the people

PORTIA. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
 For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130
 And never be Bassanio so for me:
 But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

BASSANIO. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my
 friend:

This is the man, this is Antonio,
 To whom I am so infinitely bound. 135

PORTIA. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
 For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

ANTONIO. No more than I am well acquitted of.

PORTIA. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
 It must appear in other ways than words, 140
 Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

on the other side of the world if you would walk among us at night
 (in the absence of the sun).

Antipodes: the region of the globe opposite to ours; also
 the people living there. Benedick says to Don Pedro "I will go on the
 slightest errand now to the *Antipodes* that you can devise to send me
 on," *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, i, 247-9. In *Richard II*, the King
 denounces Bolingbroke (later Henry IV) "Who all this while hath
 revell'd in the night, Whilst we were wandering with the *Antipodes*,"
 III, ii, 48-9. York, in a speech of wonderful power, tells Queen
 Margaret "Thou are as opposite to every good As the *Antipodes* are
 unto us," *third part of King Henry VI*, I, iv, 134-5.

129. **light . . . light:** Shakespeare's fondness for punning on this
 word has been noted. Jessica makes a pun on *light* in II, vi, 42, and
 Bassanio does so in III, ii, 91; the second *light* means light-headed.

130. **heavy:** sad.

132. **God sort all:** (May) God manage all matters. The Third
 Citizen, fearful of the consequences of King Edward's death, tells his
 fellow-citizens, "All may be well; but, if God *sort* it so, 'Tis more
 than we deserve, or I expect," *Richard III*, II, iii, 36-7.

135. **bound:** obliged.

136. **sense:** reason.

much bound to him: Orlando, having received some informa-
 tion from Le Beau, a courtier attending on Frederick, says "I rest
much bounden to you," *As You Like It*, I, ii, 272, and Hubert, in
King John, declares "I am *much bounden* to your majesty," III, iii, 29.

137. **bound for you as surety for the bond.**

138. **acquitted of:** repaid for.

141. **scant:** make short. See II, i, 17.

breathing courtesy: courtesy which shows itself in words
 (breath) only. Bassanio's Messenger recommends his master by telling

GRATIANO. [To NERISSA] By yonder moon I swear you
do me wrong;

In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

Would he were dead that had it, for my part,

Since you do take it, love, so much at heart. 145

PORTIA. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

GRATIANO. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring

That she did give me; whose poesy was

For all the world like cutler's poetry

Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.' 150

NERISSA. What talk you of the poesy or the value?

You swore to me, when I did give it you,

That you would wear it till your hour of death;

And that it should lie with you in your grave:

Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths, 155

You should have been respective, and have kept it.

Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,

The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.

GRATIANO. He will, and if he live to be a man.

NERISSA. Ay, if a woman live to be a man. 160

GRATIANO. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,

A kind of boy; a little scrubbed boy,

Portia that he brings "Gifts of rich value, besides *courteous breath*," II, ix, 89-90. Robert Burns (1759-1796) tells us that "Princes and lords are but the *breath* of kings," *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, line 165. We speak of "lip-service."

146. **already**: Portia is mischievously referring to the fact that Gratiano and Nerissa have been but recently married.

148. **posy**: motto, inscription.

149. **cutler's poetry**: The reference is to the custom of inscribing verses on knife-blades, by means of nitric acid (*aqua fortis*).

150. **leave me not**: do not part with me. See Portia's "confidence" in Bassanio, line 172.

151. **What**: why.

156. **respective**: regardful, caring for.

162. **scrubbed**: small, poorly-developed.

No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk;

A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:

I could not for my heart deny it him. 165

PORTIA. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,

To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;

A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger,

And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.

I gave my love a ring, and made him swear 170

Never to part with it; and here he stands:

I dare be sworn for him, he would not leave it,

Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth

That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,

You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief: 175

And 't were to me, I should be mad at it.

BASSANIO. [*Aside*] Why, I were best to cut my left
hand off,

And swear I lost the ring defending it.

GRATIANO. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away

Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed 180

Deserv'd it too; and then the boy, his clerk,

That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine:

And neither man nor master would take aught

But the two rings.

PORTIA. What ring gave you, my lord?

164. **prating**: talkative, in a boastful way. The adjective very properly fits Gratiano himself.

167. **so slightly**: on such slight ground.

169. **riveted with faith**: fastened with (a promise of) faithfulness.

174. **masters**: contains, owns.

176. **And 't were**: and *if* it were.

mad: See IV, i, 48.

177. **I were best**: it would be best for me.

182. **pains in writing**: care in drawing up (the legal papers).

Not that, I hope, which you receiv'd of me. 185

BASSANIO. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it, — it is gone.

PORTIA. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will never be your wife 190
Until I see the ring.

NERISSA. Nor I be yours
Till I again see mine.

BASSANIO. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring, 195
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, 200
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleas'd to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty 205

189. **void:** empty (as your finger).

195. **conceive:** understand.

196. **left:** gave up.

198. **abate:** See III, iii, 32, and IV, i, 71.

199. **virtue:** power. The power of the ring is explained by Portia in III, ii, 166–71.

201. **honor to contain:** obligation to keep possession of.

205. **terms of zeal:** real warmth, sincerity.
as to have wanted.

To urge the thing held as a ceremony?

Nerissa teaches me what to believe:

I 'll die for 't but some woman had the ring.

BASSANIO. No, by mine honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor, 210

Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,

And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,

And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away;

Even he that did uphold the very life

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? 215

I was enforc'd to send it after him:

I was beset with shame and courtesy;

My honour would not let ingratitude

So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;

For, by these blessed candles of the night, 220

Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd

The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

PORTIA. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.

Since he hath got the jewel that I lov'd,

206. **To . . . ceremony:** to urge you to part with a possession you 'regarded' as sacred?

ceremony: a sacred emblem or symbol. The ring is symbolical of Portia's love and of Bassanio's loyalty.

208. **I 'll die for 't:** I'll stake my life.

210. **civil doctor:** i.e. doctor of civil law. See III, iv, 50. Perhaps a pun is intended on *civil*, referring to a branch of law, and civil, meaning polite. See *Richard II*, I, iii, 128, and III, iii, 102.

213. **suffer'd:** allowed.

214. **uphold:** defend, save.

215. **should:** could, (with emphasis).

217. **beset with:** urged by. **shame and courtesy:** shame (at seeming to be ungrateful) and by (the demands of) courtesy.

218. **My honor:** Here Bassanio is answering Portia's attack, line 201.

220. **candles of the night:** the stars. Romeo, at the approach of day, tells Juliet that "*Night's candles* are burnt out," III, v, 9, and honest Banquo tells his son, Fleance, "Their [heaven's] *candles* are all out," *Macbeth*, II, i, 5.

And that which you did swear to keep for me, 225
I will become as liberal as you;
I'll not deny him any thing I have.

NERISSA. Nor I his clerk; therefore be well advis'd
How you do leave me to mine own protection. 229

GRATIANO. Well, do you so: let not me take him then;
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANTONIO. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome
notwithstanding.

BASSANIO. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And, in the hearing of these many friends, 235
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself, —

PORTIA. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
In each eye, one: — swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

BASSANIO. Nay, but hear me: 240
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

ANTONIO. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again, 245
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

232. **subject:** cause.

239. **double:** deceitful. Portia never misses a chance to quibble.

240. **of credit:** worthy of being believed.

243. **wealth:** welfare.

244. **Which:** *my body*.

247. **advisedly:** knowingly.

PORTIA. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this;
And bid him keep it better than the other. 249

ANTONIO. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

BASSANIO. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

PORTIA. I had it of him: pardon me, Bassanio,
For, by this ring, the doctor was with me.

NERISSA. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk, 255
In lieu of this, received a gift from me.

GRATIANO. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair enough.

PORTIA. You are all amaz'd:
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure; 260
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor;
Nerissa there her clerk; Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now return'd; I have not yet 265
Enter'd my house. — Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly: 270
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.

ANTONIO. I am dumb.

264. *bear* witness.

268. *soon*: without delay.

270. *Are . . . suddenly*: have come to harbor unexpectedly, with rich cargoes. See II, viii, 30, 34.

272. *chanced on*: got hold of.

BASSANIO. Were you the doctor, and I knew you not?

ANTONIO. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road. 275

PORTIA. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

NERISSA. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. —
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift, 280
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

LORENZO. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.

PORTIA. It is almost morning,
And yet I'm sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in: 285
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRATIANO. Let it be so: the first inter'gatory
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,
Whether till the next night she had rather stay, 290
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day:
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [Exeunt]

274. **living**: the means of living. See IV, i, 369-72.

276. **come to road**: See line 267, and I, i, 19.

281. **of . . . possess'd of**: See IV, i, 384.

282. **manna**: food. See *Exodus*, XVI, 14-15.

283. **starved people**: Lorenzo and Jessica are utter spendthrifts; they have spent all the ducats with which Jessica "gilded" herself.

284. **satisfied at our recital**.

286. **inter'gatories**: questions asked under oath.



THE WEDDING FEAST

Reading from left to right: Lorenzo, Jessica, a Servant, Antonio, Portia, Bassanio, Nerissa, Gratiano.

TO THE TEACHER

The Dramatic Method—Hamlet's belief that "The play's the thing" may well be taken as a text in presenting *The Merchant of Venice*—or any play—to a class. In other words, the best method of handling the play is that method which most closely approaches the dramatic. A playwright always has in mind a theater, definite actors for the rôles he creates, and a group of spectators. To regard a play simply as a form of literature, or as a printed book, is to disregard those elements which, to the author, are of the highest importance. It may not be possible to transform the classroom into a stage, but the nearer we reach such a condition, the more vital will be the appeal of the play.

The use of the dramatic method means that it is not enough to consider the play merely as a book to be read, but that it must be looked upon as a production meant for the stage, as a piece of work to be *acted*. Therefore, it follows that in so far as conditions will permit—and all possible effort should be made to bring about such conditions—the students are to *act* the play, not as a substitute for, but in addition to, studying it as a piece of pure literature. This is not as difficult as it sounds. One of two methods (or both) may be adopted: either, (i) the simple practice of reading the lines from the printed text, or (ii) memorizing selected scenes, and selected parts of scenes. By judicious selection of the most essential scenes in the play—care must be taken that the selected scenes give a clear idea of the narrative—and by "cutting" the longer speeches, the parts can be so reduced, without injury to plot or poetry, as to be brought within the memory limits of students. The comedy scenes, and the Morocco and Arragon scenes may be omitted, or considerably shortened, as well as some of the longer speeches of Bassanio and Portia. Act Five contains some very fine poetry, but it is, for that very reason, undramatic. The purely lyrical portions may therefore be omitted, or curtailed, without

doing violence to the dramatic part of the act—the quarrel about the rings.

The reading, or acting, should be done as rapidly as possible, that is, as rapidly as is consistent with clearness and understanding. As there is no need to consider the question of scenery—the Elizabethans paid little attention to it—the play should “go” rapidly. Shakespeare gains in power and in effectiveness by being given at high speed. It is well to have no more intervals than are absolutely necessary. Waiting means loss of interest. There is no reason for any interval before the end of the first scene in Act Three (which should really be the last scene of Act Two). Shylock’s cry to Tubal, “at our synagogue,” is dramatically effective to a high degree, and is a strong point on which to close. If conditions require other intervals, they may come at the close of Scene Five, in Act Two, and at the close of Scene Three, in Act Three. The intervals should be very short.

The Project Method—*The Merchant of Venice* is rich in reference to (i) characters and incidents in the Bible, (ii) characters in classical mythology, (iii) various social customs. These may be turned to account by a modification of the project method, with the use of a note-book. Students may be divided into groups for the purpose of collecting all the references relating to any one topic. When these have been found and noted, they may be entered into the note-book, in the following manner: Laban, I, iii, 67; Hagar, II, v, 43; Daniel, IV, i, 218; Janus, I, i, 50; Lichas, II, i, 32; Endymion, V, 109, etc. The entry of the name will be followed by a brief explanation of the story connected with the name, and its application to the passage in which it is found. The names may be listed alphabetically, or in the order of their place in the play, by scene and act. The preparation of a group note-book in this way, for the topics suggested, and for many others, develops a social sense among the students, as it is an activity in which all may participate, and to which all may contribute. Not the least valuable result of this application of the project method is the fact that it makes necessary a very thorough acquaintance with the play.

OUTLINE OF THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

The first act of any play, like the first chapter of a novel, or the introduction to a composition, is chiefly explanatory. The dramatist is concerned, in the opening of the play, with introducing his main characters, with making clear their relations to each other, and with giving us some indication—just enough to arouse our interest—of what the play is to be about. The first scene also gives us the setting, that is, the scene or place where the action happens. All this is necessary before the plot or story can really begin. Note how the three scenes of this act accomplish these ends.

Scene 1. At the very opening of the scene, we meet Antonio, one of the chief characters. From his conversation, and from what his friends, Salarino and Salanio, say about him, we obtain a very good idea of his disposition. Next we are introduced to Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano, three other friends, each one of whom is closely connected with the three feminine characters of the play. A conversation, which is of no great importance, takes place, but Shakespeare, anxious to begin in earnest, does not allow it to last long. Gratiano and Lorenzo depart, (Salarino and Salanio have already left) and Antonio turns to Bassanio with "Well, tell me now," and the story—the actions and events which take place in the following acts—begins. From Bassanio's speech we learn, among other things, that he is in love with the wealthy Portia, at whose house we are to meet in the next scene, and that Antonio, to whom he appeals, is ready to help him "to the uttermost."

Scene 2. Here we meet Portia, the heroine, or "leading lady," of the comedy. There is still more information that we must have in order to fully understand what is to follow, and this scene provides it. The conversation be-

tween Portia and Nerissa not only reveals their characters, but it informs us that Portia's hand is being sought in marriage, of the terms of her father's will, and—but so skillfully is this done that we hardly notice it—that she looks with favor on “a Venetian, a scholar, and a soldier,” who is none other than Antonio's dear friend, Bassanio.

Scene 3. This scene brings on the last of the important actors. We meet Shylock, the Jewish merchant, and learn of his feelings towards Antonio, his personal enemy and his business rival. The signing of the bond, which brings Antonio “within his danger,” is part of the central plot of the play.

ACT II

With the signing of the bond, at the end of the First Act, we arrive at the conclusion of the first stage of the Bond-story. In Act II, we witness the events which take place during the three months that must pass before the bond comes due. Our interests are now called (i) to the choice of the caskets, (ii) to Launcelot Gobbo, a new character, and (iii) to the elopement of Lorenzo and Jessica.

Scene 1. Here we have clearly explained the terms which must be met by suitors for Portia's hand. The character of Morocco is shown by his speeches.

Scene 2. In this scene, we meet Launcelot Gobbo, one of Shakespeare's famous clowns, and one of the best. He is the “funny-man” of the play, but he is more than that. By entering into Bassanio's service, he becomes a means of aiding in the love affair between Jessica and Lorenzo. Bassanio has not been idle since we last saw him: he has, thanks to Antonio's kindness, hired a ship and servants, and is practically ready to leave for Belmont to attempt the winning of Portia.

Scene 3. In this short scene, we learn that Shylock is being betrayed in his own house, by those from whom he has some right to expect loyalty. Jessica uses Launcelot, now in the employ of Bassanio, to deliver a letter to Lorenzo.

Scene 4. This is really a continuation of Scene 3. Launcelot has delivered Jessica's letter to Lorenzo, who proceeds to carry out the plans for eloping as suggested by Jessica herself. From his final speech, one may suspect that Lorenzo's notion of honesty is not as strict as it might be.

Scene 5. Here we see Shylock's complete trust in his daughter. Although Shylock is present, Launcelot, who has just come from Lorenzo, is able to "speak privately" the message he has for Jessica. From Lorenzo's account of the contents of her letter, we learn that Jessica is a thief, so that we are not surprised to find that she is an easy liar.

Scene 6. This is a continuation of Scene 5, and, in some editions, both scenes are printed as one. The elopement is carried out according to Jessica's plan. Antonio's remark that "Bassanio presently will go aboard" recalls our attention to the casket plot.

Scene 7. This scene advances the story of the caskets another step. By his comments on the inscriptions, Morocco reveals his own character. Portia's final "tag" makes it clear that she has no regrets at Morocco's choice.

Scene 8. The purpose of this scene is to inform the spectator of what has occurred since the elopement of Lorenzo and Jessica, and of its effect upon Shylock. Salarino's hope that Antonio's vessel has not "miscarried" is a hint that he will not be able to meet his bond.

Scene 9. As in Scenes 1 and 7, we are again in Belmont. Arragon, another princely suitor, makes his choice, and, in so doing, reveals his own personality, as did his rival in an earlier scene. Although this scene simply repeats the action of Scene 7, it is useful in that it serves to fill up the interval of three months. In addition, taken along with Morocco's choice, it tells us what casket the successful suitor must choose. It also shows that the rules devised by Portia's father are not as foolish as they appear to be at first sight. In framing them, he showed that he had a very good understanding of human nature.

ACT III

Act III is concerned with the events that take place from after Bassanio has left until the day before the court trial. In the interval between Acts II and III, Tubal, Shylock's friend, has been to Genoa, and has brought back to Venice tales of Jessica's freedom with her father's possessions. The bond-plot is again brought home to us by Antonio's losses which will make it impossible for him to meet his obligation to Shylock. Bassanio's choice once more brings the caskets into prominence. By her marriage to Bassanio, for love of whom Antonio has endangered his life, Portia, who belongs to the casket-story, becomes connected with the main plot, the bond-story.

Scene 1. This scene aims to show us (i) how the elopement of his daughter will only serve to strengthen Shylock's hatred of Antonio; (ii) the inability of Antonio to discharge his debt; (iii) the course of action that Shylock will adopt when the bond becomes due. However, aside from what it does in forwarding the action of the play, the scene is justly remembered for the great defence of a persecuted race, a defence to which there is no answer.

Scene 2. Although Portia wishes Bassanio to delay his choice, he is naturally eager to find out what is to be his destiny. His selection of the right casket, by means of which he wins Portia, concludes that part of the story. The entrance of Jessica and her husband connects their episode with the bond-plot. With his eye on the Fifth Act, Shakespeare provides for the complication of the rings with the skill that belongs only to a great master, by Portia's innocent remark, "I give them with this ring," introduced so naturally and simply that to one making a first acquaintance with the play it would give no clue.

Scene 3. This short scene takes place the day before the trial. Shylock's determination to be revenged and Antonio's desire to see Bassanio are clearly brought out.

Scene 4. The action of this scene takes place on the

same day as Scene 2, as we learn from Portia's "I set forth as soon as you," (V, i, 249). Bassanio, as soon as he has made Portia his wife, sets out for Venice. Portia, doing her own thinking, has come to the conclusion that Shylock may refuse to accept even the thirty-six thousand ducats that she offers Bassanio. Frightened at this possibility, she resolves to find out from her cousin, the "learn'd Bellario," the legal points in the case, and to go to Venice herself to defend Antonio.

Scene 5. There is a halt in the action of this comedy scene, which may be supposed to take place very soon after Scene 4. The main story plays no part in it. Portia and Nerissa have left for Venice. Before their arrival (in the next scene) there is an interval: this scene between Launcelot, Jessica, and Lorenzo helps to fill it up pleasantly. It also shows us how Portia is regarded by Jessica.

ACT IV

In this act, the Climax of the play is reached in the final solution of the bond-story. We see how Shylock's defeat is brought about, and what is to be his punishment. As our main interest is in Shylock and his fate, the play could really end here, with his departure from the court. However, as the play is not to end on a tragic note, Shakespeare skillfully provides for the comic plot which is to be developed in the last act.

Scene 1. In this scene—the greatest in the play, and one of the most popular in all Shakespeare—we see Shylock, alone, before his enemies. His hatred and his desire for revenge, the legal strength of his case, the powerlessness of Antonio's friends, and the unfeeling coarseness of Gratiano, all these are clearly shown. After all the efforts of the Duke, and of Antonio's supporters, have failed to move Shylock, Portia, acting as a lawyer, makes his defeat certain by a clever, but dishonest, trick. The concluding portion of the scene serves to relieve the tension created by the trial, and prepares the spectator for what is to follow.

Scene 2. Gratiano, obedient to Bassanio's commands, delivers the ring to Portia. Nerissa, as clever, in her own way, as her mistress, takes a cue from her, in aiming to secure from her husband the ring which she "did make him swear to keep for ever."

ACT V

Act V, which is really complete in itself, opens—and closes—on the happy note of love. Lorenzo and Jessica, temporarily in charge of the Belmont household, prepare to welcome Portia on her return. The entrance of the two husbands, and of Antonio, is followed almost immediately—as Portia and Nerissa intended—by the humorous quarrel about the rings. At the request of Antonio, always loyal to Bassanio, and when she feels that the joke has been carried far enough, Portia reveals the whole secret, to the astonishment of Bassanio and Gratiano. She is also the means of giving Antonio the pleasing news that his "ships are safely come to road."

NOTES AND QUESTIONS

ACT I

Scene 1.

Is there any reason for Antonio's sadness? Antonio rejects both suggestions of Salarino. Do the suggestions tell us more about Antonio or about Salarino? Do they show sense or sympathy?

Gratiano says to Antonio "You are marvellously chang'd." What does this tell us about Antonio's sadness? In what way does Gratiano justify his behaviour to Antonio?

Why does Salarino refer to Bassanio, Gratiano, and Lorenzo as "better company"? Note the first lines of Bassanio and Gratiano. What do they tell us of their characters?

What is Bassanio's opinion of Gratiano's conversation? Does Antonio agree with him?

What is Bassanio's purpose in telling Antonio the story of the arrows? What do you think of Bassanio's defence of his extravagance? How has he been brought to the financial condition in which we find him?

What is the first thing we learn about Portia from Bassanio? What was the former occasion of Bassanio's visit to Belmont? What is his purpose in attempting to win Portia? Is Bassanio entirely honest with Antonio in telling him of his plan to become a suitor for Portia's hand? Does he tell Antonio under what conditions Portia is to be won? Has Bassanio previously spoken of Portia to Antonio?

Antonio tells Salarino "My ventures are not in one bottom trusted, Nor to one place," but he tells Bassanio "all my fortunes are at sea." How may we explain this inconsistency?

How are the stories of the caskets and the pound of flesh connected?

Scene 2.

What are the indications in this scene that *The Merchant of Venice*, as we have it, may be a revision of an earlier form of the play, or of another, and older, play?

Why does Portia describe the world as *great*? Why is she melancholy? Is her sadness the same as Antonio's? What are the conditions to be observed by suitors for her hand? Why did Portia's father frame such conditions? Does Portia regard the choice of the caskets as a test of character?

In what way has Shakespeare made each suitor represent the country to which he belongs?

What indication have we of Portia's regard for Bassanio? Does she attempt to hide this feeling?

What are Nerissa's relations to Portia?

Scene 3.

How do Shylock's opening words indicate what has taken place in this scene before the rise of the curtain?

What are Shylock's reasons for hating Antonio?

Are there any lines in this scene to indicate that Shylock has been

planning harm to Antonio? It has been suggested that Bassanio's "Antonio shall be bound" gave Shylock the idea. What is your opinion?

In what way has Antonio wronged Shylock? Is Antonio's reply to Shylock's recital of the insults he has received likely to make Shylock feel kindly towards him? Was it necessary for Antonio—so "true a gentleman"—to have so replied? Note that in the answer of Antonio himself is to be found the first suggestion of the advice which Shylock later attempts to follow.

Both Shylock and Antonio are good business men, with a practical knowledge of the world. This being so, do you think that one would suggest, and the other accept, such a bond as is described? Shylock is known to be Antonio's enemy. Is it not strange that Antonio should appeal to him for help? Was Bassanio aware of the ill feeling that existed between Shylock and his friend?

What qualities of Shylock are shown in this scene, and what indications are there that he would be willing to forget the insults to which he has been subjected? Note how Antonio treats Shylock, and how he treats his own friends.

Why does Bassanio say "Shylock, do you hear?"

Why does Shylock say to Antonio "But note me, signior"?

Does Bassanio object very strongly to Antonio's accepting the bond? Remember that Antonio "only loves the world" for Bassanio. Can you defend Bassanio's permitting Antonio to endanger his life for him?

ACT II

Scene 1.

On the stage, this scene (and scenes 7 and 9) is usually omitted. Outside of reasons of economy, can you suggest others?

What portrait does Morocco give us of himself? What brave deeds does he declare himself willing to perform? Are his statements to be taken seriously? How does Portia regard Morocco and his brave speeches?

Scene 2.

From Gobbo's question, "which is the way to master Jew's?", what do you gather as to Shylock's prominence in Venice? How does the form of the question show us the character of old Gobbo's mind?

Do you think that Launcelot's statement, "I am famish'd in his service," is to be regarded as a true one? It has been used to support the contention that Shylock practically starved him. Is not Launcelot rather brisk and lively for a man who is suffering from the pangs of hunger? Does Launcelot leave Shylock's service because of ill-treatment, or because the plot of the play makes it necessary?

What is Bassanio's criticism of Gratiano's conduct? Do you agree with it? What request does Gratiano make of Bassanio? What promise does Gratiano make to Bassanio? Why?

Scene 3.

How does Launcelot's entrance into Bassanio's employ help the Lorenzo-Jessica plot? How does Jessica reveal her character in this scene? Why does she give a ducat to Launcelot? What does she ask Launcelot to do for her? Has she any sense of shame or regret at what she is about to do?

Scene 4.

Why does Lorenzo address Launcelot as "*Friend Launcelot*"? Must Lorenzo "needs tell all" to Gratiano, or is it necessary for him to tell *us*? Is there any need for Lorenzo to show Jessica's letter to Gratiano?

Scene 5.

How does Shylock's opening speech to Launcelot bear on the truth of the latter's complaints in scene 3? What is Shylock's opinion of Bassanio as a master?

Why does Shylock hesitate to leave? Has he any suspicion of what is to happen? What parting instructions does he give Jessica? Do you think that Shylock's speech, "Lock up my doors . . . my sober house," is sufficient to justify Jessica's "Our house is hell," in scene 3?

How do you explain Shylock's "I am bid forth to supper"? In Act I, scene 3, he has said in answer to Bassanio, "I will not eat with you, drink with you." Did Shakespeare forget, or did he mean to represent Shylock as breaking a principle of his faith, in order, perhaps, to obtain knowledge that might help him in his plan against Antonio?

Scene 6.

How does Lorenzo's phrase, "to play the thieves for wives," apply to himself?

How do Jessica's lines, "Here, catch this casket," and "I will gild myself with some more ducats," reveal her character?

Is Jessica worthy of Lorenzo's praise? Is Lorenzo capable of truly judging Jessica's actions?

Scene 7.

How does Morocco reveal his character by his comments on the caskets? What do you think of his reasoning while he is choosing a casket? From what you know of his character, as it is shown in scene 1, is it consistent? Does Morocco appreciate Portia?

What does Portia mean by "a gentle riddance"?

Scene 8.

How does this scene serve to show the attitude of Salarino and Salanio, and of Venetians in general, towards Jews?

Why did the Duke accompany Shylock to search Bassanio's ship? What is the importance of this?

Why is Shylock's "passion" at the elopement of Jessica related, instead of being shown on the stage? Is this a gain or a loss? Why?

How does this scene emphasize Antonio's love for Bassanio? Does Antonio know that Portia is not free to choose her own husband?

How do the remarks of Salanio and Salarino prepare us for the ill-luck which later befalls Antonio?

Scene 9.

This scene has been criticised on the ground that it is nothing more than a repetition of scene 7. Do you agree with this view? What purpose does this scene accomplish?

What rule of the contest does Arragon violate? What differences

in character do you note between Morocco and Arragon? Who is the better reasoner?

Does Arragon appreciate Portia?

Why does Portia warn Arragon that he must leave immediately if he fails to choose the right casket? Has she any reason to suspect that he will attempt to argue? What difference do you note in her manner towards Morocco and towards Arragon?

Is there any inconsistency between the second rule to be observed by choosers and the "schedule" drawn by Arragon?

How is Bassanio's coming made known to Portia? In what way does it differ from the arrival of the other suitors?

ACT III

Scene 1.

How are we first made aware of Antonio's misfortune? What is the value of Salarino's phrase, "the Goodwins, I think they call the place"? What fact does it skillfully make us remember?

In what tone does Salanio utter the line, "Come, the full stop"? Do you share his feeling?

Many are of the opinion that Shylock's chief reason for hating Antonio is that the latter loans money without requiring interest. What is there to support this view in Act I, scene 3? Shylock's speech in this scene, beginning "To bait fish withal," is at least a partial answer to those who claim that Shylock's hatred is based entirely on disapproval of Antonio's business methods. This plea for justice is one of the great passages in the play, and one of the great passages in all English literature. To neglect it in forming an estimate of Shylock's character and motives is dangerous, and unfair to Shylock. The trial scene, of course, must be considered—there is no possibility of forgetting it—but against it must be set, to obtain a true picture, this impassioned outburst. It is also to be noted that Shakespeare does not attempt to supply either Salarino or Salanio with an answer. Coarse jests fall easily from their lips, but they are strangers to sympathy and understanding.

Do you think it likely that Shylock would really wish to see Jessica dead?

Note that Tubal alternates good news with bad, with one breath making Shylock happy, and then destroying the effect of it by reporting facts that make his friend miserable. It has been claimed that he does this purposely, the implication being that he takes pleasure in torturing Shylock. Do you accept this view? Is there any reason for Tubal to act so? What other explanation can you give for his telling his story as he does?

"It was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys." Here we have another wonderful passage, and one to be remembered in judging Shylock. The turquoise was a rare and beautiful stone, endowed, by superstition, with magical powers, but it is most ridiculous to suppose, as some critics have done, that Shylock values it for these reasons. For years, Shylock has been engrossed in money matters, living in an unfriendly atmosphere, surrounded by people who hated and persecuted him, but he has not lost the spirit of romance: he is faithful to the memory of his dead wife, and he prizes the ring for sentimental, and not for practical, reasons, because Leah had given it to him as an engagement ring.

Scene 2.

Why does Portia want Bassanio to tarry?

What sign of favor does Portia show to Bassanio, that she did not show to Morocco or Arragon?

Why does Portia tell "Nerissa, and the rest, [to] stand all aloof"?

Whom does Portia mean by her later reference to "The rest aloof"?

What is the meaning of the song introduced in this scene? Does it help Bassanio in his choice? How? As we must assume that Portia is responsible for its introduction, may we not ask if she is strictly following the rules made by her father? Does this affect our opinion of her? How? In addition to the help it might give Bassanio, does the song serve any other purpose in the scene?

By what lines of thought does Bassanio show the danger of judging by external appearances? What are his reasons for rejecting the gold and silver caskets? What moves him to select the "meagre lead"? In what respect is his reasoning superior to that of Morocco and Arragon? Have any of Bassanio's speeches in the earlier scenes of the play indicated that he possessed the intellect necessary to think out, and to express, the passage beginning "So may the outward shows be least themselves?"

Compare Portia in this scene with Act I, scene 2. What changes do you note?

What indication is there in Portia's speech to Bassanio, "You see me . . . to exclaim on you," and in his reply, of the possibility of future trouble?

Why does Gratiano ask Bassanio's permission to marry? Was it necessary? Was it necessary for Nerissa to ask Portia's permission? What does Bassanio mean by saying "so thou canst get a wife" to Gratiano? Why does he ask Gratiano if he means "good faith"?

How does Lorenzo explain his—and Jessica's—appearance at Portia's house? Is his presence, at this point, necessary to the action of the play?

Why was Salerio so anxious to have Lorenzo accompany him to Belmont?

How does Antonio's letter affect Bassanio? Portia? How does Portia attempt to comfort Bassanio after he has read Antonio's letter?

Does Jessica's part in this scene serve to raise her in our estimation?

Scene 3.

What bearing has Shylock's "Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause," on the question of his reasons for hating Antonio?

Is Antonio entirely sincere—or honest—in the only reason which he gives to Salarino to account for Shylock's hatred?

Why is the Duke, who cannot be presumed to have any kindly feelings for Shylock, at such pains to see that he obtains justice? Why is the Duke unable to "deny the course of law"?

Scene 4.

Is Portia worthy of Lorenzo's praise? Is Lorenzo qualified to judge a really fine character?

What is Portia's conception of true friendship?

Is Portia entirely truthful in all that she tells Lorenzo?

What request does Portia make of Lorenzo?

What instructions does Portia give to Balthasar? To what extent are they necessary to the successful carrying out of Portia's scheme?

Scene 5.

Is this scene necessary to the development of the play?

What is Lorenzo's opinion of Launcelot?

What is Jessica's praise of Portia? Is Jessica qualified to judge?

ACT IV

Scene 1.

In what manner does the Duke describe Shylock? Is this description consistent with the Duke's speech to Shylock after he has entered the room? Does the Duke really expect a "gentle answer"? Why do the Duke, Bassanio, Gratiano, and Portia appeal to Shylock to be merciful?

What does Shylock mean by "I'll not answer that"? Why does he, in the following lines, proceed to answer the Duke's question, after he has declared that he will not do so? Note his frequent repetition of the word "answer." What may it indicate?

What is Shylock's argument in defence of his attitude? Is it a just one? Note that the Duke has no answer for it.

In what sense is Shylock's suit a "losing" one?

To what else, besides the ducats, is Shylock referring when he says "The pound of flesh is dearly bought"?

What purpose is served by the wordy battle between Shylock and Gratiano?

Did Portia know that the Duke had sent for Bellario?

Did Bassanio's offer, "The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all, Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood," require any courage?

In what sense does Portia use "must" in line 177? In what sense does Shylock take it? Does he do so intentionally?

What requests does Antonio make of Bassanio before the sentence is to be pronounced?

What is Shylock's opinion of Bassanio and Gratiano as husbands? Why would he prefer that "any of the stock of Barrabas had been Jessica's husband"?

Is it natural for Bassanio and Gratiano to be willing to sacrifice their wives in order to save Antonio's life?

By what means is Shylock defeated? Is Portia's knowledge of law her own, or has it been obtained from Bellario?

What is your opinion of Gratiano's conduct in this scene?

What do you think of the Duke's "mercy"?

How does Bassanio attempt to reward Portia? What is her reply?

Scene 2.

What three purposes are accomplished by this scene?

ACT V

Scene 1.

What purpose does Stephano perform?

What is the effect of "sweet music" upon Jessica?

What is the effect of music upon "youthful and unhandled colts"?

How does Lorenzo regard the man "that hath no music in himself"? Have Lorenzo's actions in the earlier scenes indicated that he is capable of the deep feelings he expresses in this scene?

What is Portia's first direction to Nerissa? Why is it necessary? How does Lorenzo assure her?

What charge does Nerissa make against Gratiano concerning the ring she had given to him? How does he seek to defend himself? What does Portia tell Gratiano? What effect have her words on Bassanio? How does he feel when he hears Portia say that she "should be mad" had he given the ring away?

What is Bassanio's defence? Is it the same as Gratiano's?

How does Antonio show that his confidence in Bassanio is unshaken?

What news has Portia in store for Antonio? What "good comforts" has Nerissa for Lorenzo and Jessica?

PASSAGES FOR IDENTIFICATION

Of the following passages, tell (1) By whom they are spoken; (2) To whom they are spoken; (3) Under what circumstances:

1. They lose it that do buy it with much care.
2. I have no mind of feasting forth to-night.
3. Hate counsels not in such a quality.
4. And many Jasons come in quest of her.
5. This night methinks is but the daylight sick.
6. When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven.
7. I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time.
8. For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
9. By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong.
10. A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross.
11. The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives.
12. Nothing is good, I see, without respect.
13. I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
14. This comes too near the praising of myself.
15. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
16. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?
17. You were to blame, I must be plain with you.
18. And I will go and purse the ducats straight.
19. I think he only loves the world for him.
20. There is no power in the tongue of man To alter me.
21. Like one of two contending in a prize.
22. So is Alcides beaten by his page.
23. Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy.
24. Let me give light, but let me not be light.
25. Go to; here's a simple line of life!
26. I thought upon Antonio when he told me.
27. You have a noble and a true conceit Of god-like amity.
28. From whom he bringeth sensible regrets.
29. Forgive a moiety of the principal.
30. Builds in the weather on the outward wall.
31. I never more will break an oath with thee.
32. Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.
33. Your mind is tossing on the ocean.
34. I come by note, to give and to receive.
35. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.
36. I will try confusions with him.
37. Your wife would give you little thanks for that.
38. In terms of choice I am not solely led.
39. I was beset with shame and courtesy.
40. My ventures are not in one bottom trusted.
41. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
42. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper.
43. I never did repent for doing good.
44. We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.
45. Some there be that shadows kiss.
46. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
47. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions.
48. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

49. Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice.
50. A substitute shines brightly as a king.
51. We leave you now with better company.
52. Madam, you have bereft me of all words.
53. You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief.
54. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.
55. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.
56. Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.
57. I am as like to call thee so again.
58. He is a proper man's picture.
59. 'T were good you do so much for charity.
60. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue.
61. What talk you of the poesy or the value?
62. O, that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!
63. A day in April never came so sweet.
64. Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth.
65. I could not for my heart deny it him.
66. Commend me to your honourable wife.
67. I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two.
68. Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause.
69. I will assume desert.
70. My ships come home a month before the day.
71. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
72. I am a tainted wether of the flock.
73. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!
74. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.
75. So may the outward shows be least themselves.

SUGGESTED PASSAGES FOR MEMORIZATION

Act I.	Scene 1.	My wind . . . his merchandise.	(22-40)
		Let me play . . . after dinner.	(79-104)
		In Belmont . . . fortunate.	(161-176)
	Scene 3.	Signior Antonio . . . moneys.	(98-121)
Act II.	Scene 1.	Mislike me . . . gentle queen.	(1-12)
		Even for . . . with grieving.	(22-38)
	Scene 6.	Who riseth . . . wind.	(8-19)
	Scene 7.	Some god . . . as I may.	(13-60)
	Scene 9.	Madam . . . his lord.	(85-94)
Act III.	Scene 1.	To bait . . . the instruction.	(46-63)
		I pray . . . from election.	(1-24)
	Scene 2.	Away then . . . the fray.	(40-62)
		So may . . . the consequence.	(73-107)
		You see . . . on you.	(149-174)
		Madam . . . Bassanio's dead.	(175-185)
		O sweet Portia . . . rocks?	(245-266)
	Scene 4.	I never . . . you.	(10-35)
		I'll hold . . . to-day.	(62-82)
	Scene 5.	It is . . . her fellow.	(59-69)
Act IV.	Scene 1.	I have . . . answer'd?	(35-61)
		What judgment . . . have it?	(88-102)
		The quality . . . there.	(179-200)
Act V.	Scene 1.	How sweet . . . hear it.	(54-65)
		The reason . . . be trusted.	(70-88)

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